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ISSUE 185 DECEMBER 2006

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Contributors · *Robert Alstead*
Amanda Brown · Alan Cassels
Guy Dauncey · Ishi Dinim · Arne Hansen
Carolyn Herriot · Kolin Lymworth
Vesanto Melina · Geoff Olson
Gwen Randall-Young · David Suzuki
Eckhart Tolle · Sonya Weir
Sales · *Head office 604-733-2215*
toll-free 1-800-365-8897
Contact Common Ground:
Phone: **604-733-2215**
Fax: 604-733-4415
Advertising: admin@commonground.ca
Editorial: editor@commonground.ca

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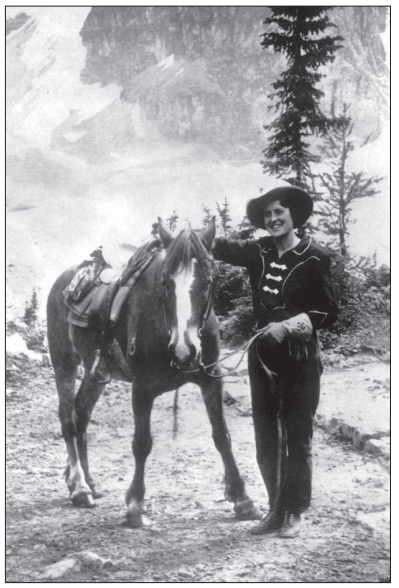

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Climate changes to hot air

The USA has now been killing in Iraq (based on lies about WMD) longer than America was fighting in WWII. Thank God our friends to the south have started to confront the lies and violence that their government perpetrated on a smaller, weaker, but oil rich nation. The sad thing is that our PM copies their president's foreign policy and spends our hard-earned tax dollars trying to convince us Canadians that we ought to follow lock step with the Empire off to war. Well Harper is out of step in these interesting times. His neo-Conservative party has made Canada a pariah on the world stage for acting like such a dunce about climate change, basically dishonouring our commitment to the Kyoto Accord. Breaking the Kyoto promise is irresponsible to say the least, insane or suicidal others might say. And what has Harper promised instead, a so-called made in Canada clean air act to please his fossil fuel felons' policy that is a tired rerun of the made in the USA clean air act. And when does he promise to get some results, how about 2030 or 2050. Maybe. Our environment, or *Enron*ment minister Rona Ambrose is an embarrassment to most Canadian environmentalists. She previously worked for Ralph Klein promoting Tar Sands investment. Her right hand man, chief of staff Daryl Reid, is a fundamentalist who may believe that global warming is a precursor to the end times. He may be right, but this is death of life as we know it, not Armageddon, stupid. Reid used to head up the lobby group Focus On the Family. Check the real science, not the PR crap from the few climate change deniers paid by the oil industry. Harper comes from the oil and gas industry in Texas North. Maybe he works for the same crude dudes. If we really want to clear the air on climate change then there are two aspects, content and intent. Get better people who care more about the truth than about having their political brand win. Earth is too precious. We need better hearts and minds protecting our planet.

Vegetarian holiday meals

NUTRISPEAK • *VESANTO MELINA MS, RD*

During the holidays, young people return from college, relatives arrive from near and far and we connect with seldom seen friends. For an estimated one family in four – the number is growing – festive holiday meals must be adjusted to accommodate at least one vegetarian.

These include young people with concerns about animal rights and environmental issues, as well as older individuals who have had a cancer, diabetes or cardiovascular concern. Year after year, people of all ages, who are reluctant to gain a pound, or five, and who want meals that won't overstuff them, often turn to vegetarianism.

There are many ways to extend the fare for our celebration meals that go far beyond a dreary, little veggie burger for the lone vegetarian. Moreover, accommodating vegetarians can make our holiday spread both prettier and more colourful. The menu ideas below are also suitable for the vegetarians (and vegans) we love and also accommodate people with food sensitivities or celiac disease.

A large squash stuffed with seasoned cooked grains, then baked, makes a spectacular centrepiece. The stuffing can include basmati rice, quinoa, onion, parsley, walnuts or pecans, sun-dried tomatoes and seasonings, such as basil and oregano. You can create your own stuffing combination, or use the recipe for sensational stuffed squash and good gravy in *Raising Vegetarian Children* (Stepaniak and Melina, McGraw-Hill, 2003).

There are many ways to extend the fare for our celebration meals that go far beyond a dreary, little veggie burger for the lone vegetarian.

Another seasonal menu item is hazelnut paté, a delicious appetizer. As an entrée on wintry days, vegetarians, as well as vegans, will enjoy shepherd's pie, which is made with vegetarian "ground round" instead of hamburger. German chocolate cake with coconut squash icing may well become everyone's favourite chocolate dessert. Ask your guests to guess which vegetable is part of the icing; likely, no one will guess correctly. (See recipes for these in *Becoming Vegetarian* by Melina and Davis, Wiley Canada, 2003)

For those whose family gathering includes people with food sensitivities, squash stuffed with grains is a welcome offering and may be served with one of several excellent gluten-free gravies. Another popular choice, and my favourite in the world of gluten-free baking, is pumpkin spice bread. Ultra-fudge brownies and heavenly date squares are good too. All are made without a scrap of eggs, dairy or wheat. (See recipes in the *Food Allergy Survival Guide*. Melina, Stepaniak and Aronson, Healthy Living Publications, 2004)

The simple, yet elegant, dish pictured here is perfect for the holiday season, but it can add colour and a festive touch any time of the year. Furthermore, it is nutritious, providing an excellent source of vitamins A and C, plus a good source of calcium, iron, potassium and vitamin B6. Made with flaxseed oil, a single serving is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids. Steamed white rice may be heaped in the centre of the wreath to give a snow-like appearance.

Kale and red pepper holly ring

Deep green kale tossed with bright red bell peppers resembles a holly wreath when presented in a circle on a plate. As this way of serving greens is likely to have broad appeal, you may wish to double or triple the recipe for larger groups.

6 cups thinly sliced kale greens
¼ cup diced sweet red pepper
2 tbsp flaxseed oil or olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp tamari or soy sauce

Fold kale leaves in half lengthwise and remove the rib. Then slice thinly. Place kale in steamer, sprinkle with red pepper. Cover and steam over medium-high heat until the peppers are tender-crisp. Drain. Combine oil, vinegar and tamari in a bowl large enough to hold kale. Toss kale and peppers into vinegar mixture and place on warm platter. Create a wreath shape by pushing the seasoned kale toward edges of platter, leaving an open space in centre. If desired, heap steamed rice or place a rounded nut loaf in the centre of the ring.

Makes about four servings.

Vesanto Melina is a registered dietitian and consultant and co-author of seven food and nutrition classics. She lives in Langley, BC. (vesanto@nutrispeak.com)604-882-6782. (www.nutrispeak.com)

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Cell phones

Invisible hazards of the wireless age

HEALTHY?

BY AMANDA BROWN PHD

Photo by Arekmalang

Few people would be surprised to hear that cell phones are unhealthy. But how many of us actually know the degree of damage they cause, the extent of the cover-up by the industry, or that there is a viable solution? Dr. George Carlo, a mobile phone industry whistleblower, recently presented a talk in Vancouver about how electropollution from wireless technology can cause brain damage, cancer and an array of mental illnesses.

I checked his facts against recent, peer-reviewed scientific papers and the results were startling. Dr. Carlo explained why the industry's user manuals don't warn of these health hazards: currently, there are pending class action lawsuits against them, which threaten to expose the entire industry, similar to the cases brought against "Big Tobacco", and the asbestos and silicone breast implant industries. But what really shone brightly in Dr. Carlo's message were his realistic solutions. One option is to have fibre-optic cables running underground to our curbs to shorten the distance and power necessary for the wireless signals. According to Dr. Carlo, this option requires an ongoing search for the diamond politician or activist who will take the lead.

It's important to get the facts straight. Dr. Carlo, a scientist hired by the cell phone industry in the '90s, now believes cell phones are the greatest health hazard of our time. In his view, there is no question that mobile phones cause terrible health consequences. It seemed prudent to independently check the recent, peer-reviewed scientific literature to see if his mid-1990s results are supported today. A quick search revealed five excellent studies from 2006 that provide strong evidence of serious problems from electromagnetic signals from cell phones.

In contrast, several review studies that pooled results from 10 to 20 other studies suggested the evidence isn't conclusive either way. However, these reviews may have been diluted by the inclusion of some studies with ties to telecommunication industry funders. One author cited in these studies is affiliated with on Australian institute that has an FAQ web page full of suspicious PR (see www.acrbr.org.au/FAQ.htm). The website states this group of scientists has agreed, by committee, on the science they want to do: essentially, that which shows cell phones are harmless, and they will focus their research accordingly. Very revealing PR. Dr. Carlo also found that among more than 300 studies completed over the past six years, those funded by the industry are more than six times more likely to find "nothing wrong" than studies that are funded independently.

Dr. Carlo explained in detail his theory of how cell phones cause brain damage. It begins with the wave. The signals use carrier waves of around 1,900 megahertz (MHz), which are so high in frequency that they pass right through us, and our houses, unnoticed. But harmful information-carrying waves are packed into the carrier waves. These information waves, which carry signals that can be decoded by our computers and mobile phones, are low-frequency waves in the range of one hertz (Hz). That's slow. So slow that our cells can feel them as an aggravating, physical jolt at their surfaces. Within 30 seconds or so of bombardment, our cells temporarily shut down their surface transport and intercellular communication functions, to resist further damage from threatening invaders.

Exposure of these data seriously threaten the whole telecommunications industry – a large part of the stock market – and the more than 2 billion people around the world who are using cell phones, totally uninformed about their hazards. The prediction is that one in four people who use a cell phone will have a cell phone or wireless related symptom by 2015.

Normally, small threats to cells cause them to send out chemical signals to neighbouring cells that tell them to protect themselves from invaders, and they signal for help from our immune system's T-cells. But bombardment from mobile phone waves causes whole areas of cells and tissues to shut down their surfaces, stopping the active transport of good and bad stuff in and out of the cell, without time to signal a warning to other cells. Further, the shut down of gap junction communication pathways compromises tissue and organ functions, including the immune system.

Free radicals build up inside the cells so they eventually die and spill toxins and fragmented DNA into the space between cells. There, micronuclei form as a result of membranes becoming organized around broken bits of DNA. These micronuclei wreak havoc, disrupting cell function and allowing cancers to form. That is how, as Dr. Carlo explains, both benign and malignant tumours are caused by wireless signals. He suggests a similar process occurs at the blood-brain barrier that protects our delicate neurons and their tiny sophisticated chemical signals from contaminants in our blood. Once cells in the barrier are shut down by mobile phone waves,

all kinds of big, toxic molecules enter our neural spaces where they can cause many problems, among them "autism spectrum disorders," which include some types of anxiety attacks, hyperactivity, ADD, problems with focussing, mild and severe autism, hyper-irritability and others.

Based on levels of adult cell phone use in the '90s, Dr. Carlo predicts 40,000 to 50,000 new cases of brain and eye cancer caused by mobile phones each year worldwide. By 2010, he estimates the number to be near a half million cases. Given that Dr. Carlo's prediction derives from conditions in the '90s – average use of 500 to 1,000 minutes per month, with little or no wireless background signal – the numbers are bound to be higher. Increasingly, we are blasted by wireless signals all day long, both at home and at work. In certain closed spaces, such as cars or buses, the signals are intensely amplified as they bounce around, trapped. Data, so far, suggest there is no safe level, only a probable safe duration of exposure. Our cells may not be damaged until after about 30 seconds of bombardment from wireless phone signals.

Dr. Carlo also suggests our cells can be imprinted so they remember the disruption and pass it down to future cells. This may be why some people seem to have heightened sensitivity, experienced as sudden unexplained anxiety when walking past a wireless hotspot. While peer-reviewed studies have not yet been done to directly address this claim, most of us have experienced the effects of an information-carrying signal that disrupts sensitive objects around us, like the car stereo. Although additional research is required, our instincts are probably right; these signals have an effect and it is unnerving.

So why don't our cell phones and wireless cards come with a "Use at your own risk" label and a warning that there is evidence they may be harmful? The crux of the problem is historical. Mobile phones were exempted from pre-market safety testing in the '80s because they were presented as merely "low-powered" devices, taking the onus off the industry to prove their safety. This was a problem for advocates and opponents alike.

Industry found it necessary to prove they were safe to defend against claims such as the cell phone related brain cancer death of Deborah Reynard in 1993. Reynard's cancer was unusual, growing from the outside to the inside of her head, at the precise location of her mobile phone antenna. Following that case, the industry began to fund its own researchers to study the health effects of cell phones, but it struck a deal with the regulating bodies that stipulated they would only research the damaging effects of cell phones as long as they could remain unregulated until all the research was done. That's when the industry hired Dr. Carlo.

Now that Toronto has a widespread wireless system and hundreds of office buildings have local wireless networks, background levels of dangerous information carrying radio waves are 500,000 times higher than they were five years ago, in effect, making the background exposure almost as high as that from individual cell phone use.

Even before Dr. Carlo's group's research was published, the industry began to file for patents on devices to make them safe, but these depended on proof that cell phones posed a danger. It was a classic Catch-22, leading to a cascade of hypocritical

continued on p.20

Cell pollution solutions: abstinence or going underground

Dr. Carlo offers solutions at three levels:
1) primary solutions that prevent damage;
2) secondary solutions that reduce the effects of the damage;
3) tertiary solutions that repair the damage.

Primary solutions include using a hands-free headset to keep the phone away from your body. However, this doesn't reduce your background exposure to wireless hotspots, and even worse, wire-antenna and Bluetooth headsets may act as antennas to attract ambient or background wireless signals to your head. Dr. Carlo suggests using "air-based" head sets, although they won't prevent second-hand electropollution.

The best solution is to reduce background radiation by moving to an older, but better, technology: fibre-optic cables that transport the signal to the curbsides of our schools, cafes, offices and homes, after which we can either plug-in to the signals or use short distance or air-based wireless. It's expensive in that it involves digging trenches to keep the cables straight and protected, but the technology is ready to go and the insulation around them is very effective; the radiation is almost nil.

Dr. Carlo suggests combining primary solutions with secondary and tertiary solutions. Secondary solutions include working with the subtle energies of our cells, which have their own natural electromagnetic fields. Tertiary solutions include enhancing people's overall health to foster the repair of cell membranes. Boosting our health by improving the immune system's ability to stimulate cellular repair may help with both of these solutions. However, in our cities with widespread, blanket wireless systems, as in Toronto where background radiation is already 500,000 times higher than it was five years ago, it's hard to imagine that merely boosting our immune systems could completely counter the harmful effects.

Lastly, Dr. Carlo talked about abstinence. He confessed that while abstinence works, it is not really practical. Try getting teens off their cell phones! One study showed that 91 percent of 12 year olds use cell phones, and in Buffalo teens were clocking in 2,600 to 7,000 minutes per month on their phones.

With cheap packages going for as little as $150 for 5,000 minutes, it's unlikely teens will abstain any time soon. Among males, there's even the belief that carrying their phone in their front pocket, where it is known to reduce sperm count, is the greatest thing ever, good birth control! Abstinence doesn't work for cell phones any more than it works for teens and sex. In fact, Dr. Carlo himself uses a cell phone, albeit, with an air-based headset.

Marketing campaigns for mobile phones and wireless technology capitalize on our need to fill the empty spaces in our urban landscape. They are irresistible because they facilitate community. Despite the damage they cause, we like the feeling of the grassroots empowerment and interconnectedness they provide.

If this connection is real, let's harness it now to spread the truth about these hazards and work together on solutions.

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DRUG BUST *BY ALAN CASSELS*

It's time for a vocabulary-building exercise. Let's dust off a few old words you haven't heard for a long time and take them out for a test ride. Try "phocomelia." Savour that one and let it roll around your tongue a bit. How about "teratogenic?" Sound eerie?

What the heck is phocomelia, you ask. A handy online dictionary provides the following definition: pho·co·me·li·a [foh-koh-mee-lee-uh, -meel-yuh] *n.* A birth defect in which the upper portion of a limb is absent or poorly developed, so that the hand or foot attaches to the body by a short, flipper-like stump.

And "teratogenic?" What's that about? The same online dictionary states: "A drug or other substance capable of interfering with the development of a foetus, causing birth defects." In any conscious person, the word phocomelia should conjure horrifying images: a tangle of toes sprouting from a torso where legs should be, perfectly formed cherubic babies, perfect in every sense except there are flippers where arms should be. That's phocomelia.

These are the deformities most closely associated with thalidomide, a prescription sedative taken by pregnant women in the 1960s that proved to be extremely teratogenic.

Many people may not know that the US, due to a defiant commissioner at the FDA who was suspicious of the drug's safety, would not permit the company to market thalidomide in the land of the free. That didn't stop the manufacturer from marketing it in more than 47 countries around the world, including Canada, which led to between 8,000 and 10,000 babies born with, you guessed it, phocomelia.

From the ashes of disaster, hope springs forth. After the thalidomide debacle, legislators in most countries, following the lead of the US Congress, toughened up legislation to require rigorous safety tests before a drug could be sold. It is unbelievable now, unthinkable even, that a drug for pregnant women would have been approved and prescribed to women worldwide, without ever being proven safe for the very people it was supposed to help: pregnant women.

Fast forward 40 years and thousands of new drugs later and let me pose this question: Can we be sure that any drug taken by a woman during pregnancy is safe for her and her developing fetus and that it won't be teratogenic? Are there other thalidomides lurking in our midst right now, drugs taken during pregnancy whose risks exceed their potential benefits?

A couple of troubling examples deserve a closer look. One is a drug called isotretinoin, sold under the banner of Accutane. This teratogenic drug is prescribed to millions of young people around the world to treat the one condition that they fear almost as much as death: zits.

It is well known that the price for clear skin may be birth defects, and the manufacturer goes to great lengths to warn women who are thinking of using Accutane to take extra precautions in the birth-control department. Doctors are advised to counsel patients on effective birth control if they wish to prescribe isotretinoin. Yet between 1982 and 2003 in the US, more than 2,000 women became pregnant while taking the drug.

While most pregnancies were aborted, about 160 babies with birth defects were born. Over the years, this has caused the FDA to beef up its programs to try to ensure that female patients taking isotretinoin do not become pregnant.

Despite some baby steps taken toward ensuring pregnant women do not take unsafe drugs, there is troubling evidence that these efforts are being eroded. What quickly comes to mind is the concerted push to have women who are taking antidepressants to continue to do so during pregnancy; in some medical circles, a mother's depression is seen as much more serious than any potential harm to the unborn fetus from the drug.

Despite the fact that flipper babies still haunt our collective consciousness, the message from the medical establishment regarding pregnancy and antidepressants could be characterized as this: "Don't worry your pretty little head, just keep taking your pills."

Back in August 2004, both Health Canada and the US FDA issued warnings to pregnant women to withdraw slowly from their antidepressant medication in the third trimester. There were reports of women taking SSRI antidepressants – drugs like Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft and Effexor – giving birth to newborns with withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal? Yes. One of the major problems with all the SSRIs is that withdrawal can be extremely difficult, even excruciating for some patients. This is certainly not new. The withdrawal effects, duly noted elsewhere were simply being logically applied in a new place: in unborn children. (See Health Canada's August 9, 2004,

advisory of potential adverse effects of SSRIs and other antidepressants on newborns at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/protection/warnings/2004/2004_44.htm)

Health advisories notwithstanding, several months later reports in medical journals advised that the warnings were unnecessarily alarmist, asserting that the maternal use of SSRIs had not proven to be a problem, at least not as big a problem as depression in mothers. I have to admit I find it troubling

continued on p.10

Despite the fact that flipper babies still haunt our collective consciousness, the message from the medical establishment regarding pregnancy and antidepressants could be characterized as this: "Don't worry your pretty little head, just keep taking your pills."

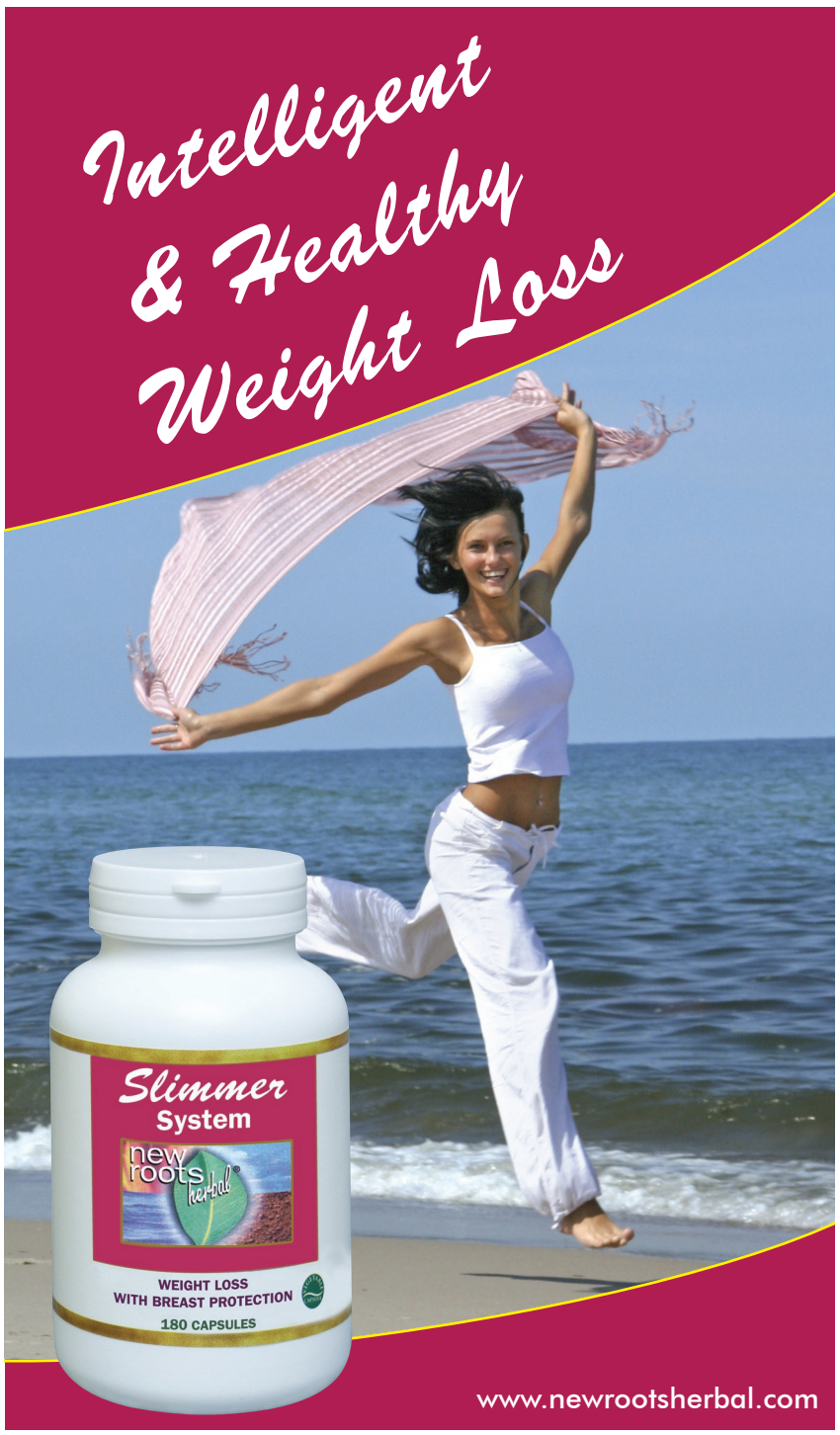

Photo by: Eminavn

Cassels cont. from p.9

when medical authorities imply that pregnant women who stop taking their antidepressants may be putting themselves and their unborn babies at serious risk. There is no doubt that depression can be debilitating, but the continued admonishment to "Stay on your drug" assumes that since there is incomplete evidence that SSRIs cause harm to unborn babies, the drugs are probably safe.

Let me say this politely**:** absence of evidence is not evidence of absence**.** Basically, if our medical establishment has yet to study whether certain drugs cause direct harm to pregnant women, we cannot assume the drugs are OK. Because there is no data to clearly show the problem, doesn't mean the problem doesn't exist. (This rationale kept people smoking because Big Tobacco constantly repeated that there was no evidence that their products were harmful.

Me? I take a different tack on this issue. In the absence of evidence, the most rational course of action is the precautionary approach, which is summed up in the *Hippocratic Oath*: "First, do no harm."

One problem with the reasoning used by those who promote the use of antidepressants in pregnancy is the underlying assumption that the only way to treat depression is with medication. This ignores the effective and safer ways to treat depression that have been widely studied.

MedPage Today recently featured an article by Crystal Phend entitled, *Although antidepressants may have an effect on fetuses in utero, so may the lack of the drug during pregnancy*. The writer quotes a researcher claiming there is a strong link between depression and pregnancy measured by cortisol, the stress hormone.

Claiming that cortisol is a useful marker for depression, the researcher asserts that if a woman has an elevated cortisol level, it probably difficult for the baby. The problem is that a person's cortisol levels go up and down every day, and stress is not depression. You can be very depressed and not stressed. Or very stressed, but not depressed. So cortisol levels don't tell you anything.

Ralph Faggotter, a general practitioner in Australia and member of Healthy Skepticism (www.healthyskepticism.org), a group which works on reducing harm from misleading drug promotion, writes: "My guess is that this [cortisol] trial was conducted specifically for the purpose of finding some ammunition to counter-attack the recent negative publicity in relation to the use of SSRIs during pregnancy."

Faggotter says the researchers appear to have predetermined their outcome, noting, "… it is particularly clear from the way in which the data has been misrepresented and over-interpreted to produce the desired conclusion." The saga around the effects of SSRIs on fetuses will no doubt continue because there's a lot of money riding on women – even pregnant ones – continuing to take their medications.

The bad news continues to pour in. In September of last year, Health Canada issued a warning that paroxetine (Paxil), a widely prescribed SSRI, causes malformations to the fetus. (For more information, visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/medeff/advisories-avis/prof/paxil_3_hpc-cps_e.html) We learn that an epidemiological study of more than 3,000 pregnant women exposed to paroxetine, compared to other antidepressants, was related to a two-fold increase in major congenital malformations, especially involving cardiovascular malformations. I take these warnings very seriously, knowing that Health Canada and a major manufacturer do not issue warnings and advisories unless there is at least some evidence of a clear and present danger.

But do doctors?

Who knows, but here's a warning to you, dear reader: take any medical study or media report with a huge grain of salt if it reassures you that pregnancy and drugs coexist easily and safely. Unless proven safe, assume any drug can be teratogenic. Unfortunately, it is a lesson we need to relearn every year.

And if in doubt, remember one word: phocomelia.

Alan Cassels is co-author of Selling Sickness *and a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. He is also the founder of Media Doctor Canada (www.mediadoctor.ca), which evaluates reporting of medical treatments in Canada's media.*

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Get ready for next year

ON THE GARDEN PATH • *CAROLYN HERRIOT*

Rake leaves and debris from your lawn. Check your tree ties; strong winds can uproot newly planted trees. Tie up cypress and cedar trees; heavy snow can break or damage them. Also, fasten climbing plants to supports to protect them against damage from high winds.

You can reduce the effects of wind and snow by a third by pruning hybrid tea and floribunda roses. Strip the leaves from remaining canes, but don't compost them; they may harbour black spot, mildew or rust spores. Bury them in the garden instead.

Remove dead, damaged, diseased and spindly growth first from your climbing and rambling roses. The aim is to maintain a vigorous framework of healthy canes. Ramblers tend to be more vigorous than climbers, so more wood may be removed. Prune side shoots back to three buds. To keep your rose bushes healthy, rake fallen rose leaves and mulch underneath to cover any spores.

Keep on mulching, especially newly planted trees, bushes and semi-hardy perennials. Tip: Avoid contact between mulch and stems to prevent rotting. Save leaves from large trees, such as maples, oaks and chestnuts. A covering of leaf mulch insulates roots, feeds the soil, helps retain moisture, improves soil structure and smothers weed seeds.

Protect container plants by moving them closer to the house, under the eaves or deck, a sheltered corner, a cool greenhouse, or inside a brightly lit entranceway or garage.

When the last crops of raspberries have been harvested, cut the woody fruited canes down to soil level. This helps prevent pests and diseases from developing, and lets in light to promote new cane growth. Prune out the fruited canes of blackberries and hybrid berries, such as boysenberry, tayberry and loganberry. Finally, tie the remaining canes onto their supports to prevent winter damage. Prune grape vines while they are dormant; leave one or two strong buds on each stem.

Young rosemary and bay trees – one or two years old – may not overwinter successfully, so keep them protected. Plant them out once the roots have fully developed.

When the fern-like asparagus foliage yellows and dies, cut the asparagus down to an inch (2.5 cm) above ground, then mulch; asparagus is a heavy feeder and relishes aged manure, compost or what-have-you. Cut back stalks of Jerusalem artichokes. The tubers are sweeter after a few hard frosts and can be harvested from the garden throughout the winter.

The best way to prevent disease is to remove disease. Go through all the plants in the greenhouse and remove any mouldy plant parts. Keep checking throughout the winter for infections. The damp, confined environment of a greenhouse is a perfect breeding ground for fungal spores and disease. Water greenhouse plants sparingly and preferably in the morning so they don't sit wet and cold at night.

Cold snaps leave birds vulnerable, so keep bird feeders filled with nuts, seeds, fatty scraps and fruit.

If you have a pond, remove any decaying plants and leaves to prevent methane and hydrogen sulfide gas build-up. These gases can be poisonous to fish. Cut back dying, marginal plants and remove fallen leaves from the water, before they sink and break down, causing algae to bloom.

To protect fruit trees from dormant fungal diseases, spray all tree surfaces with a mixture of two tablespoons (30 ml) of wettable copper to a gallon of water. The wingless, female winter moth walks up fruit trees to lay her eggs on the branches; the resulting green caterpillars feed on spring foliage. To keep winter moths off your fruit trees, tie grease bands around fruit tree trunks. Use one or two six-inch, removable wraps, such as burlap sacking tied around the tree with twine, and coat them with a sticky product, such as Tanglefoot.

Remember that cold snaps leave birds vulnerable, so keep bird feeders filled with nuts, seeds, fatty scraps and fruit.

Pat yourself on the back. You have worked hard and performed miracles in your garden this past year. It's time to look forward to a brand new gardening year, working in co-creation with Mother Nature.

From A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide *by Carolyn Herriot. $29.95, Earthfuture Publications, Victoria, BC. Available at Banyen Books, Duthie Books or at* (www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath).

How Often Do You Hear Yourself Saying

"NO, I Haven't Done It Yet,

I've Been Meaning To!"

Discover The Secret Psychology Of Eliminating Procrastination FOR GOOD!

Stephan Stavrakis
Mcht, Mnlp
Canada's TOP Mental Strategies Coach

Their minds are a hodge-podge of half baked ideas and "I've been meaning toos". They think of a thousand "schemes" to make money quickly—but DO nothing about them. Thoughts flash in and out of their brain with the speed of lightning. New ideas rush in crowding out old ones before they have taken form, shape or completion.

They are SCATTER-BRAINED...

Their mind is like a powerful automobile running wild—destroying their hopes and dreams, their POSSIBILITIES! They wonder why they don't get ahead and never get anything done. They cannot understand why others, with less ability, pass them in the prosperity parade. They pity themselves, excuse themselves, and sympathize with themselves. The great tragedy is that they have every quality that leads to success--intelligence, originality, imagination, ambition and completion! Their trouble is that they don't know how to USE their brain properly.

Their mental make-up needs an OVERHAULING...

There are millions like them—failures, half successes—slaves to those with BALANCED, ORDERED MINDS. It is a known fact that most of us use only one-tenth of our brainpower. The other nine-tenths are dissipated into thousands of fragmentary thoughts, daydreaming, wishing. We are only paid for ONE-TENTH of what we possess because that is all we USE. We also accomplish things with the same ONE-TENTH.

We are hundred horse-power motors delivering only ONE-TENTH of the total horse power we possess!! The reason most people fall miserably below what they dream of attaining in life is that certain mental faculties in them BECOME ABSOLUTELY HALF-STARVED THROUGH DISUSE and "Non-Supporting Thoughts," just as a muscle often does. If, for instance, you lay for a year in bed, you would sink to the ground when you arose; your leg muscles, UNUSED FOR SO LONG, they could not support you.

You Possess Everything You Need In Your Mind!

It is no different with those rare mental faculties, which you envy others for possessing. You actually DO possess them, but they are ALMOST HALF-STARVED, like unused muscles, simply because they are faculties you seldom, if ever, USE. Be honest with yourself. You know in your heart that you can have more, be more, and attain more if you just begin to do the things you know you need to get down now!

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- **Why am I procrastinating?**
- **Why can't I get anything done?**

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Community vs. corrupt commerce

How money really works

BY GEOFF OLSON

US native Catherine Austin Fitts graduated with an MBA from the Wharton School of Business in 1978, and spent a year in Hong Kong with the Yale in China Language Institute. She was managing director and member of the board of directors of Dillon Read and Co., a New York investment bank. From 1989 to 1990, she was assistant secretary for the federal housing commissioner with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), where she was responsible for the servicing of $320 billion of mortgage insurance, mortgages and properties, portfolio analysis and pricing for 63,000 communities, and reengineering of organization of 7,000 employees in 80 offices nationwide. She was also the founder of Hamilton Securities Group, Inc., a broker-dealer/investment bank and software developer.

While unloading my backpack from a float plane on Salt Spring Island, the pilot asks me why I've flown out on such a rainy, dismal day. I explain that I'm a writer and I've come to hear a talk from someone by the name of Catherine Austin Fitts. "Oh, Catherine," he says with a smile. As we enter the airline office, the pilot animatedly explains the reason for my trip to the staff. "Catherine's an amazing woman," responds a woman at the desk. "I wish I could accomplish in my life half of what's she's done in hers."

I'm only five minutes on Salt Spring, and the financial wiz Catherine Austin Fitts, whose name gets 72,000 hits on Google, is already highly recommended. Her CV is impressive to be sure, and clearly she is someone who knows how money works. And that's why she's here: to share her smarts with the Salt Spring Monetary Fund, a group of residents who are rethinking how money works in their community.

At a local theatre, Fitts appears with a blue-suited, casual, business look. She might be the good natured, middle-aged woman writing up your mortgage application, yet when this former insider from Washington and Wall Street talks about money, it's like nothing you'll ever read in *Report on Business* or hear on MSNBC.

Fitts' first inkling of the darker side of the political economy came during her tenure in Washington, under the first Bush administration, when she was assigned by HUD's then secretary Jack Kemp to clean up the agency's books. When she arrived at her office, she asked the controller to see audit figures. He responded they were only audited every couple of years. She learned that HUD didn't have the habit of tracking its financial results on a location specific basis, so each field office had no clue how the money worked in its jurisdiction.

With the documentation she had access to, there was no way of knowing if each field office was making or losing money. Under the law, the agency was required to be self-supporting, so who had that information? The accounts department did, but Fitts was told that they reported to a different assistant secretary and weren't allowed to talk to her. After some intradepartmental lobbying, two months later she discovered figures indicating the agency was losing $11 million a day. She later discovered that a major US defence contractor managed the systems and accounts at HUD. This was the beginning of her descent down the rabbit hole of the so-called "black budget" and the US covert economy.

We've got 100 percent of our money invested in one thing; it's called the tapeworm and it's completely dependent on warfare, organized crime and all these other things. And our money is safe as long as we bet the tapeworm is going to win.

Through the course of several administrations, including that of Bill Clinton, a massive amount of money has been siphoned out of public agencies in the US, Fitts says. "Four secretaries of the treasury refused to produce audited financial statements and reported a total of $4 trillion in undocumentable adjustments."

The vast majority of government officials were completely in the dark on the mechanics behind this, and where the money was going, yet it appeared to be no simple matter of bureaucratic incompetence. "I can't tell you how many able and competent people I've met in government," she says.

Fired after 18 months in office, Fitts says she witnessed firsthand the rot at the core of Empire, far beyond the apple polishing games of partisan politics. For her, choosing Democrats over Republicans is simply flipping the coin of the realm to the other side.

"I happen to believe what's going on is really spiritual in nature, and solutions have to start with a spiritual foundation," Fitts tells her audience. She harkens back to a talk she had given a few years earlier, before a "wonderful group of people" from something called the Spiritual Frontiers Foundation. She gave her usual shtick, explaining how the entire economy and culture are financially dependent upon too many things that harm people and the environment. She told them the global economy is now inextricably bound to financial fraud, planet-plundering trade agreements and laundered drug money.

"So I asked this wonderful group of spiritually evolved people what would happen if we stopped being the global leader in dirty money. Let's pretend there's a big button and if you push that button you can stop all narcotics trafficking in your town or city tomorrow. Who here would push the button? And out of 100 of these spiritual people, how many do you think would push the button?" The room is silent. "Only one." The reason most people balk at such a thought experiment, Fitts learned, is that they don't want their mutual funds to go down, and they don't want their taxes to go up.

"In community after community, people are saying they're so angry at George W. Bush, but what they don't understand is that they're financing all the things they hate. If 99 percent of the most spiritually evolved people in America do not want the red button pushed, if you're George W. Bush, can you push the red button?" The question hangs in the air, unanswered. As a government official, one of the things Fitts constantly witnessed was how policies were engineered to promote higher stocks for corporations. "There was tremendous synergy between how policies are designed and what drove the New York Stock Exchange up," she says.

As an illustration, Fitts cites a 1999 report by journalist Kelly O'Meara on the single common denominator found in cases of high school shootings in the US. O'Meara claims the shooters were on Ritalin or other prescribed psychotropic drugs. Pointing to an overhead slide, Fitts shows a profit breakdown of the nine million American children on Ritalin, with the profit per child to the maker at an estimated $54 per annum.

"I have a close family member who was a teacher in the Tennessee school system who was constantly pressured by parents to sign something that said their kids need to be put on Ritalin, because if your kid was disabled you could get a social security cheque," she adds.

To Fitts, this is a perfect example of how government and corporations cooperate to extract both financial and living capital from communities, through mechanisms that promote a wide range of unhealthy dependencies

– fiscal, pharmaceutical, electronic and beyond. She calls this deeply pathological system "the economic tapeworm."

In an article for New Zealand's *Scoop* media, Fitts wrote that she hit upon the term one day when a natural healing practitioner explained the strategy used by a tapeworm to prosper. A tapeworm injects a chemical that triggers a craving by the host for what the tapeworm wishes for its dinner. "By managing its host's desire, a tapeworm manipulated its host to set aside self-interest and please its parasite. And so the tapeworm proceeded to consume its host's energy and health, with the host doing most of the work," Fitts notes.

Her concept of an "economic tapeworm" is metaphorical shorthand to explain a financial system that relies on economic and military warfare to finance and subsidize itself. It gives a negative return on investment by centralizing wealth and power.

"The tapeworm, a parasite that over time eats its host, can more accurately describe the demonic patterns of stripping places of intellectual capital that come with American imperial conquest. The dumbing down so often complained about within America's borders is a phenomenon that our military appears to be implementing globally. We seem intent on removing spiritual power and intellectual IQ as we depopulate globally, moving out the honest and competent and putting the corrupt and bureaucratic in charge," Fitts explains.

One of the things that Fitts finds most disturbing about the tapeworm is that it has organized its leadership around private banks and defence contractors and its governance and intellectual air cover around think tanks and private universities and their tax-exempt endowments. According to Fitts, the tapeworm model has been about 500 years of central banking and warfare, but its invasive powers have been considerably amplified by shapeshifting powers of electronic capital, and surveillance/data-mining technologies.

The tapeworm is a crafty beast. In her talk on Salt Spring, Fitts provides the example of ethical investing, noting that today's form of socially responsible investment, "… in the liquid part, is generally promoting large corporations." Her aunt, a dyed-in-the-wool peace activist, invested in an ethical investment fund that caught Fitts' attention. After going through screen after screen on her monitor, Fitts discovered a line for Halliburton, the US defence contractor formerly headed by vice president Dick Cheney. "My aunt calls me up and says I can't possibly be invested in this company. And sure enough, she was in a state of shock, she was invested in Halliburton.

"We've got 100 percent of our money invested in one thing; it's called the tapeworm and it's completely dependent on warfare, organized crime and all these other things. And our money is safe as long as we bet the tapeworm is going to win. It's crazy to make money from the stock market over here then go take that money and buy fresh water or healthy food over here."

The audience is dead quiet at this point. But Fitts has hope. She doesn't think the tapeworm is going to win. "If the history of mankind shows anything, it's that highly centralized systems get really perverted and evil and they just don't hang together."And the former HUD official claims to have plenty of exposure to the system's dark side.

New York Stock Exchange chairman Richard Grasso embracing a commander of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC, the supposed "narco terrorists:" with whom the US is now at war) in 1999 "to bring a message of cooperation from US financial services" and to discuss foreign investment and the future role of US businesses in Colombia

After her efforts to address high-level corruption in Washington, she quickly fell off her colleagues' speed-dial, only to elicit a more disturbing kind of attention. In her interview on the nationwide radio show *Coast to Coast*, she asked George Noory if he had ever seen the movie *Enemy of the State*. "I played Will Smith for 10 years," she told the host. She recalled a perpetual harassment campaign that included stalking and break-ins. "I went through extraordinary danger, and many, many times I was sure I was dead," she tells her Salt Spring audience. (On *Coast to Coast,* she credited former LAPD police officer Mike Ruppert, founder of the peak oil website www.fromthewilderness.com, for saving her life.)

Her approach now to high-level corruption is summed up by one of the titles in her slide show: "Don't worry if there's a conspiracy; if you're not in one, you need to start one." Considering the "pro-centralization team" has a highly effective agenda, the "pro-decentralization team" needs one of its own.

The tapeworm itself is too big to take on, Fitts says. You cannot fight and win against something with as many resources and capital at its command, and so thoroughly integrated into the investment, corporate, political and intelligence infrastructure of North America. But there is one thing you can do, she insists. You can starve the tapeworm by rebuilding financial and human capital closer to home, investing wisely and locally as much as possible.

Much of the remainder of Fitts' talk touched on equities, the bond market and other arcane financial mechanisms, before she got to her "Popsicle Index." She defines this as the percentage of people in your community who can leave home, go to the nearest place to buy a Popsicle and come home safely.

Fitts explains the Popsicle Index is a subjective measurement for how people feel, particularly kids and their parents, about their community, adding, "It's a rule of thumb, which expresses the human capital in its place." Fitts recalls when she was a little girl growing up in Philadelphia, the Dow Jones index was 1,500, but the Popsicle Index for her neighbourhood was about a 100 percent. "It was

continued on p.31

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INSPIRATION FOR THE YEAR AHEAD...

Inner Reflections
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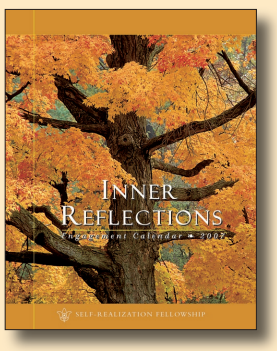

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Just be and enjoy being

THE POWER OF NOW • *ECKHART TOLLE*

SPIRITUALITY

Does the past take up a great deal of your attention? Do you frequently talk and think about it, either positively or negatively? Then you are not only reinforcing a false sense of self, but you are also helping to accelerate your body's aging process by creating an accumulation of past in your psyche. Verify this for yourself by observing those around you who have a strong tendency to hold on to the past.

Die to the past every moment. You don't need it. Only refer to it when it is absolutely relevant to the present. Feel the power of this moment and the fullness of Being. Feel your presence.

Are you worried? Do you have many "what if" thoughts? You are identified with your mind, which is projecting itself into an imaginary future situation and creating fear. There is no way that you can cope with such a situation, because it doesn't exist. It's a mental phantom. You can stop this life-corroding insanity simply by acknowledging the present moment.

You can improve your life situation, but you cannot improve your life. Life is primary. Life is your deepest inner Being. It is already whole, complete, perfect.

Become aware of your breathing. Feel the air flowing in and out of your body. Feel your inner energy field. All that you ever have to cope with in real life – as opposed to imaginary mind projections – is this moment. Ask yourself which "problem" you have right now, not next year, tomorrow or five minutes from now. What is wrong with this moment? You can always cope with the Now, but you can never cope with the future, nor do you have to. The answer, the strength, the right action or the resource will be there when you need it, not before, not after.

"One day I'll make it." Is your goal taking up so much of your attention that you reduce the present moment to a means to an end? Is it taking the joy out of your doing? Are you waiting to start living? If you develop such a mind pattern, no matter what you achieve or get, the present will never be good enough; the future will always seem better. A perfect recipe for permanent dissatisfaction and non-fulfillment, don't you agree?

Are you a habitual "waiter"? How much of your life do you spend waiting? What I call "small-scale waiting" is waiting in line at the post office, in a traffic jam, at the airport, or waiting for someone to arrive, to finish work and so on. "Large-scale waiting" is waiting for the next vacation, for a better job, for the children to grow up, for a truly meaningful relationship, for success, to make money, to be important or to become enlightened. It is not uncommon for people to spend their whole life waiting to start living.

Waiting is a state of mind. Basically, it means that you want the future; you don't want the present. You don't want what you've got; you want what you haven't got. There is nothing wrong with striving to improve your life situation. You can improve your life situation, but you cannot improve your life. Life is primary. Life is your deepest inner Being. It is already whole, complete, perfect. Your life situation consists of your circumstances and your experiences.

For example, many people are waiting for prosperity. It cannot come in the future. When you honour, acknowledge and fully accept your present reality – where you are, who you are and what you are doing right now – you are grateful for what you have, grateful for what is, grateful for Being. Gratitude for the present moment and the fullness of life now is true prosperity. In time, that prosperity manifests for you in various ways.

So give up waiting as a state of mind. When you catch yourself slipping into waiting, snap out of it. Come into the present moment. Just be, and enjoy being. If you are present, there is never any need for you to wait for anything. So next time somebody says, "Sorry to have kept you waiting," you can reply, "That's all right, I wasn't waiting. I was just standing here enjoying myself, in joy in my self."

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Restoring your soul

UNIVERSE WITHIN • *GWEN RANDALL-YOUNG*

You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body.
– C.S. Lewis

Judging from the clients I see in my practice, it seems that anxiety is reaching epidemic proportions. What is startling to me is that in addition to seeing it in teens, young adults and in the middle-aged and seniors, I am seeing it in children as young as five or six.

At the same time, I see how sped-up and intense life has become, and I cannot help but think that the two are related. Modern life cannot, in any way, be considered our natural habitat.

Think of how important it is for most people, that if animals must be kept in captivity, that they are provided as natural an environment as possible. Well, we are animals.

Imagine if you performed the following experiment on animals: you altered their diet and provided them with food that is highly processed, lacking in nutrition and high in sugar, salt and perhaps even caffeine. You altered their sleep schedule so they could no longer rest when tired, and you kept them stimulated with noise and activity so they did not get sufficient sleep. You enclosed too many animals too close together so they could not have their own space, which increased the likelihood of conflict.

You forced them to keep running on a treadmill, even when they were tired, because they had to follow a schedule, and you reduced the amount of sunlight and fresh air to which they were exposed.

Without a doubt, what you would get would be animals suffering from anxiety. They would have more illness and more stress. They would fight with each other more often, and they might even pull out their hair.

Life was not always as it is now. When I think of paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries, there seems to have been a lot of lounging around, which was not just a solitary activity, but appeared to be a social event. The people look very relaxed and content, comfortably dressed in flowing robes and bare feet.

There was a time when people went to sleep when it got dark and awakened with the sun. They also spent a lot of time in nature, because nature was everywhere. In big cities today, we have children who have never seen a forest or a river. I remember in Sunday school when I first heard the Twenty-Third Psalm. I did not know for sure what the words "He leadeth me to lie down beside still waters; He restoreth my soul" really meant, but I was filled with a sense of calm.

How do we reconcile the pace and demands of modern life with the need to frequently restore our souls? Will we forget what it feels like to experience our soul? What will happen to children who never lie on the grass looking up at the clouds, search for four-leaf clovers, chase butterflies, eat carrots from the garden or make mud pies?

What will happen to children who never lie on the grass looking up at the clouds, search for four-leaf clovers, chase butterflies, eat carrots from the garden or make mud pies?

Anxiety may be an alarm going off when we have become disconnected from our souls and all that is good, true and meaningful. The more natural our lives, the more soulful we are.

Time in nature, fresh air and sunshine and organic, whole foods all keep us grounded and connected to the soulful part of our being. They also help us release those things that may be physically or emotionally toxic.

Anxiety may also be a sign that our lives have become out of balance. If you no longer feel you are driving your life, but rather are running along behind just trying to keep up, it is time to take inventory. What may be needed is more unscheduled time for breathing, walking, talking, looking at stars or even taking a nap.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and the author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. *For articles and information about her books and CDs, visit (www.gwen.ca). See display ad this issue.*

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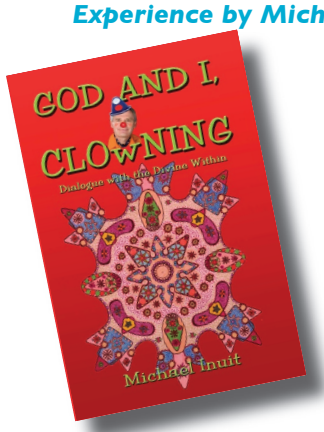

Within each of you, I am the Self,
clowning with My clones.
Clowning while talking with God-the-Self,
in a simple dialogue, is it possible?
I created your Spirit for that!

To listen to Me, God, you need to stop thinking.
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A prayer at a time of crisis

EARTHFUTURE • *GUY DAUNCEY*

In August, John Holdren, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, warned that at the current pace of climate change, a catastrophic sea level rise of up to four metres is possible by 2100.

In October, scientists at Britain's Hadley Centre for Climate Change warned that, if we don't make urgent cuts to our emissions, a third of our planet's land will be desert by the end of the century.

And in November, a study published in *Science* warned that the world's fish and seafood populations will collapse by 2048, if our current trends of habitat destruction and overfishing continue.

I received a phone call recently from a middle-aged man who told me he had been reading about global climate change and crying for three nights, unable to sleep.

Rest assured, there's plenty more where that comes from. I received a phone call recently from a middle-aged man who told me he had been reading about global climate change and crying for three nights, unable to sleep. If this is happening to you too, it may not be a sign of imminent mental breakdown. It is more likely a sign that you are very sane indeed, and showing a healthy emotional response to this mind-boggling situation.

What can we do? We must certainly take practical actions such as cycling more, buying less carbon-based stuff and writing to our MPs and MLAs (see www.onedayvancouver.ca). It's also important to remain positive. Who knows when a surprise development will come out of nowhere, making success seem more possible?

We can also seek guidance at a deeper level.

It has been my experience during my 58 years of living that if I sincerely ask for guidance from a presence or source of wisdom that I respect, whether as an act of prayer or meditation, provided my intentions are pure and seeking a way to serve, not to take, positive results will follow. I take this "Law of Guidance" to be one of the laws of the universe, along with gravity, thermodynamics and the law of attraction (check out *The Secret* at www.thesecret.tv/home.html).

If we use the law of attraction, we can draw to ourselves whatever we choose, although it might be a selfish choice and involve releasing more carbon. If we use the law of guidance, however, the response will guide us onto a path of greater fulfillment and service.

I base my understanding of this on the reality that all is interconnected, and that the universe is evolving towards greater wholeness and unity. (This is not yet taught in physics classes or Biology 101.) When we open our spirit to alignment with this purpose, we receive clues, ideas or invitations that offer us new ideas and show us things that we can do to make a difference. It doesn't matter whether you ask for this guidance from within your own unconscious mind or from God or The Great Spirit. It does not need to be religious. All is One.

So here is a prayer at a time of crisis:

Dear Great Presence, here I am. Please guide me and show how I may serve, that I may contribute my skills, my love and my commitment to the turning of our planet towards greater sustainability, cooperation and love.

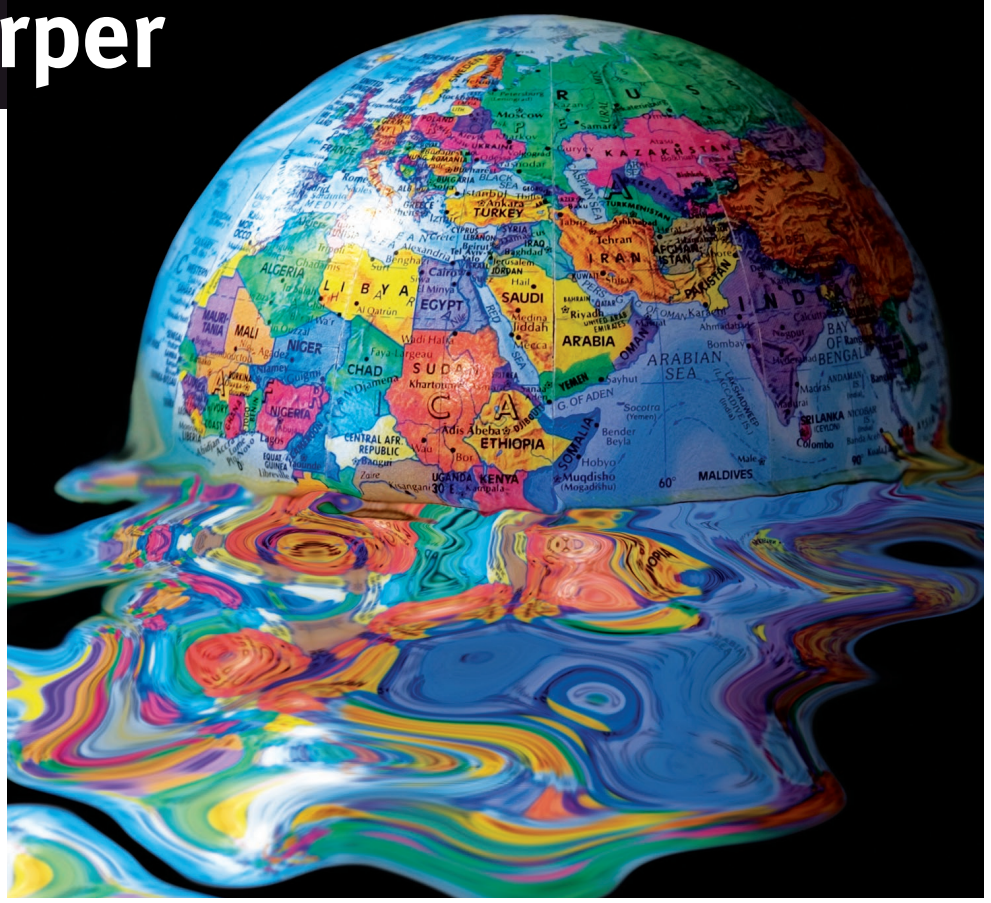
When you're done, don't sit at home and wait. Get out there and be spontaneous. Talk to people. Follow your impulses. Walk into that café, bookshop or meeting. Have fun. Something will appear, whether from the universe or from your own mind. All great projects and initiatives start with the tiniest seed that comes, as it were, out of nowhere. This is one of the sources of guidance that can help us chart a successful path through this crisis and into the Solar Age. It will also help you sleep more soundly.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org), and author of Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change. *(www.earthfuture.com)*

PS: When I wrote last month that if we shrink the universe's evolution down to a single year, humans do not appear till the last 18 days, I was (oops!) slightly wrong. Albert Dexter and Matthew Salkeld, who are both sharper with their calculators than I am, point out that "seven million years ago" represents 0.18 days, not 18, so we don't appear until 7:40pm on December 31. The Industrial Revolution – and our current global crisis – starts in the last ¼ second of the year.

Get out and look at the world melting Mr. Harper

SCIENCE MATTERS • *DAVID SUZUKI*



Art by Eti Swinford

I'm no economist, but I read the papers. After the federal government unleashed the dog that is the Clean Air Act, I have to ask, "Does the prime minister?"

I'm starting to wonder. Prime Minister Harper's Clean Air Act – yes, the very one he touted and championed for so long, the one he deep-sixed Kyoto for, the one he flew himself and a half dozen other ministers across the country to tell confused journalists in a closed door media event that it would be announced the following week – landed with a resounding thud. It was immediately obvious to the media, the opposition, environmentalists and pundits alike that the act lacked teeth. And it didn't take them long to chew it to bits.

The funny thing is it was such a bush-league political blunder. Did Harper think he could so easily pull the wool over Canadians' eyes? Or did he just totally misread public sentiment on this issue? Memo to Harper: Canadians are very concerned about the environment, their health, Canada's international reputation and the connections between all three. You might want to at least look like you're paying attention.

Over the past year or two, Canadian polls have consistently shown increasing concern about environmental issues, especially global warming. Hardly a day goes by where there isn't another disturbing story in the news about glaciers melting, permafrost buckling, species extinction and more. Naturally, Canadians expected something halfway decent from a new act, especially after Harper's caucus presented this "Made in Canada" alternative to Kyoto as the second coming.

Then the penny dropped. Headlines were almost universally condemning. Heck, an editorial in the *Vancouver Sun*, a paper not exactly known for having green leanings, took Harper to task for failing to live up to expectations.

Influential *Globe and Mail* columnist Jeffery Simpson called the Clean Air Act a "damp squib" and posed some especially relevant questions in a recent column: "Why do we offer tax incentives for high-carbon-producing sectors of the economy, but not for low-producing ones? Once we start understanding that carbon emissions are a problem, and that most of them are bad for the planet's health, should they not be priced accordingly? Use more, pay more? Use less, pay less?"

We pay for dirty industries to make huge sums of money and pay again to clean up the environmental messes they leave behind. Ouch.

Well, yes. In fact, you'd think that the prime minister, a supposed champion of the free market, would be all over this kind of polluter-pay principle. After all, it seems completely fair. Why should the rest of society pay for one industry's pollution? And why are taxpayers still subsidizing dirty industries anyway?

Canadians get hit coming and going on this one. We pay for dirty industries to make huge sums of money and pay again to clean up the environmental messes they leave behind. Ouch.

Leading investment bank Morgan Stanley seems to think there's money to be made through the polluter-pay principle. It recently made headlines by announcing plans to invest $3 billion US in carbon emission credits. You remember those things created through the Kyoto Protocol? Global trading in this new carbon market, which allows Kyoto signatories to buy and sell pollution credits doubled this year to $22 billion US.

Meanwhile, a former World Bank chief economist has warned that failing to curb global warming could trigger a world depression. Sir Nicholas Stern was asked by British Prime Minister Tony Blair to look into the economic ramifications of fighting global warming versus merely trying to adapt to it. His findings? The costs of cutting emissions are manageable, but the cost of doing nothing could lead to economic disaster. Again, his report was hardly a secret. It was all over the news.

Kyoto or no Kyoto, much of the world is moving on and starting to do something about global warming. Not by 2050, but right now. Please, someone get the prime minister a newspaper subscription, because he doesn't seem to have noticed.

Join the Nature Challenge and learn more at (www.davidsuzuki.org).

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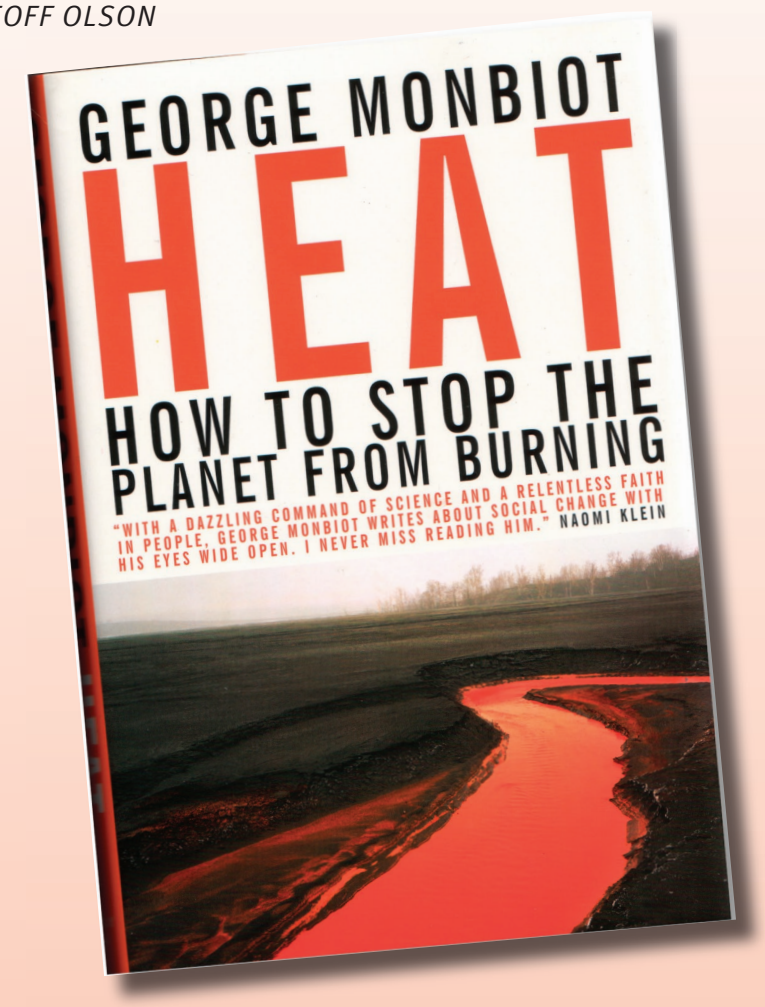
George Monbiot outs climate change deniers

BY GEOFF OLSON


GEORGE MONBIOT
HEAT
HOW TO STOP THE PLANET FROM BURNING
"WITH A DAZZLING COMMAND OF SCIENCE AND A RELENTLESS FAITH IN PEOPLE, GEORGE MONBIOT WRITES ABOUT SOCIAL CHANGE WITH HIS EYES WIDE OPEN. I NEVER MISS READING HIM." NAOMI KLEIN

George Monbiot's incendiary new book, *Heat: How to Stop the Planet From Burning*, opens with a dedication to his newborn daughter Hanna: "May this be a fit world for you to inhabit." The next line, from the preface to the Canadian edition of *Heat*, hits closer to home. "In the court of international opinion, Canada has been let off lightly," the author begins. "You think of yourselves as a liberal and enlightened people, but you could scarcely do more to destroy the biosphere if you tried."

Monbiot tears into the Harper government for swallowing the Bush administration's line on carbon emissions, and for taking a made-in-the-USA approach to climate change. Our nation is becoming as much a pariah on the world stage as the US. "Nice and well intentioned as you are, you do as much to drown Bangladesh, or starve the people of the Horn of Africa as the most obdurate throwbacks in the shrinking state of Bushistan."

British journalist George Monbiot is highly regarded for his penetrating columns in the Guardian. An indefatigable researcher with a good grasp of science, Monbiot was among the first journalists to uncover the corporate endowments to "grassroots" organizations and think tanks, which in turn subsidize the climate change skeptics.

In *Heat*, he details the absurdist involvement of tobacco company Philip Morris in sowing confusion. The corporation, one step of deniability away from the oil companies, funded front groups that subsidized attacks on so-called "junk science." These included studies of second-hand smoke risks and global warming from industrial emissions. The idea was to perpetuate the fallacy that there is a lack of scientific consensus on a range of profit-threatening issues.

But *Heat* is more than a polemic against co-opted politicians and their corporate taskmasters, who consistently torpedo any efforts to seriously address climate change. It's an alarm call that this may be our last chance to avoid a one-way trip to a planetary inferno. Monbiot shows how this is still possible. In the opening chapters, the author cites a line from Christopher Marlowe's play Dr. Faustus – "The god thou servest is thine own appetite" – and deconstructs the shadowy historical figure whose name inspired stories of a man who traded his soul to the devil. An "immoderate and foolish braggart" mentioned by Renaissance writers apparently became the model for Marlowe's wizard.

Monbiot follows a later version of the story by the poet Goethe, in which Satan will acquire the doctor's soul only if the latter "... stops striving and succumbs to smug complacency." Faust can avoid Hell by struggling to the end to put his technical knowledge to the best ends. Monbiot shows the relevance of this fable to modern times: if we work ceaselessly and selflessly, we may, like Faust, avoid a Hellish fate marked by high temperatures.

Monbiot's activist sensibility on climate change puts him in the optimist camp. Many research scientists and ecologists, former NASA consultant James Lovelock, for example, believe we've already crossed the Rubicon; billions will die from the damage we've already done to the biosphere with carbon emissions. The author agrees that the future does indeed look bleak. Where he differs with some of his more resigned colleagues on a heat worse than death is that it's a done deal only if the industrialized world shrugs and accepts a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Monbiot is good with scientific data and primary sources, and convincingly argues that beyond a two degree celsius temperature increase, there is a good chance the world's climate will go "nonlinear" in a big way. This means climate change feedback loops that spiral out of control, such as the permafrost completely melting and releasing huge volumes of methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than C02, in turn feeding further temperature increases. Some climatologists are now talking of a global temperature increase as much as three degrees or more above Monbiot's critical threshold of two degrees, which is essentially a death knell for coastal cities and probably most of civilization.

If there's a single image that sticks with me from reading Heat, it's of a baby carriage balancing on a knife edge.

And here's the rub. To keep us under the critical threshold of a two-degree temperature rise, Monbiot argues that carbon emissions will have to be cut not by five, 20 or even 50 percent. The entire globe must achieve cuts in carbon emissions of 60 percent by 2030. The industrialized world, which is responsible for the bulk of emissions, will require a per capita cut of 90 percent over the same period.

This will involve a massive change in the way we think and live, a Manhattan Project in reverse for our fossil-fuelish lifestyles. Citing an impressive range of data, Monbiot shows how this may be achieved without forcing us into a global depression. Yet all the blue boxing in the world is not enough for us to navigate the shoals of temperature increase and economic breakdown. A monumental effort will have to come from all levels of society, with real leadership from politicians and policy makers.

Given the current inertia of our corporate and political world on any given matter, Monbiot's recommendations may seem to some

like a snowball from Hell fantasy. With the current regime of denial in Ottawa and Washington – not to mention the reluctance of energy hungry nations India and China to take advice from the First World – it seems a fool's errand to seek out a planetary consensus. It wasn't till halfway through the book that I stopped shaking my head, muttering "It'll never happen."

With the examination of how it is possible to warm and cool homes with zero energy input, and the huge potential of wind turbine technology, *Heat* started to read less like a wet-dream for policy wonks than a roadmap to a better world. To give just one example, Monbiot states that a frequently cited figure – alternative energy sources will satisfy only 20 to 30 percent of our energy needs – is the result of governments commissioning studies requiring solutions up to that.

Some things will have to go entirely, among them, airline travel for the masses. Monbiot insists there's simply no way around the significant contribution of jet travel to the degradation of the biosphere, other than to ban it outright for holidaying flyers. A world we can live with doesn't include a yearly trip to Cancun.

Like a sorcerer's apprentice, the author sweeps a deluge of facts and figures toward the reader. The middle section of the book is dense with scientific information. In the final chapter, Monbiot drops the technical talk and movingly cites his personal stake in this, or rather the stake of his newborn daughter Hanna.

"This baby, this strange little crea-

ture, closer to the ecosystem than a fully grown human being, part pixie, part frog, part small furry animal, now 16 days old and curled up on my lap like a bean waiting to sprout, changes everything. I am no longer writing about what might happen to 'people' in this country in 30 years time. I am writing about her. As she trembles on the threshold of life, the evidence of her mortality is undeniable. It seems far more real than mine."

Most of us recognize the emotional truth of this – parents know it viscerally – but it seems we won't snap out of our collective trance until we bridge the mental divide between our way of life and the threat it poses to a great many species on this planet, including the pixie/frogs dozing on adult laps.

If there's a single image that sticks with me from reading *Heat*, it's of a baby carriage balancing on a knife edge. All the more maddening to see our grinning prime minister, a climate-change denier of the first order, forever smiling with infants in photo ops.

mwiseguise@yahoo.com

NEWS ITEM: Environment minister Rona Ambrose feeling the heat on climate change...
Oh, PLEASE...
Do we HAVE to keep talking about the damn weather?
OLSEN

Letters to the editor

Stop the BC Utilities Commission from approving the Alcan water-power purchase agreement. The BCUC deadline is December 15. See (www.hydrofactsbc.ca).

Hydro should tell whole story

Lately, the BC public has been bombarded with BC Hydro stating that BC is a net importer of electrical power. This would lead us to believe that if Campbell's plan of private power generation is not implemented, all our latté machines will hiss to a cold stop.

True, BC is an importer of power. Not because we need it, but because it makes money. A large portion of out-of-province power is generated by thermal energy. These steam plants are designed to operate most efficiently when at full load and it is better to keep them at this level 24-seven. At night, this creates a surplus of power in the West. BC Hydro can buy this [coal and nuclear] power at a very low cost. This enables it to reduce the hydro dam output. During the day, when there is a large demand for power – mainly in the US western states – BC Hydro turns up its generating capacity at the dams. This power is then sold to the North American grid at a very high price. This is very good business practice; however, BC Hydro should tell the whole story.

In the last 40 years, political meddling with BC Hydro has cost us millions of dollars. First, there was the Hat Creek fiasco, and lately, Glen Clark's Georgia Strait natural gas pipeline to Vancouver Island. Is Premier Campbell's private power generation going to give us a third?

Dave Thomson, Cobble Hill, BC,
arthurcaldicott@sqwalk.com

Galvanize support for rivers

As a concerned citizen, I really want to know what I can do about the BC Hydro situation that you have outlined in your magazine. How is this problem realistically going to be solved? I am not a "negative Nelly," but I feel like this is an avalanche. I see what you are saying, but what can I do? It would seem to me that it is up to the big media to cover this story and I know they won't, so where does that leave us? On a larger scale, I see that it is a systemic problem; how do you combat that? Getting information out is extremely important; is your publication at universities? What do students think? If you can't galvanize the people, I think this issue will just keep chugging along. When is the last time people have been galvanized to take on a big issue other than getting Fox pulling its OJ special? I feel people are so disconnected from their surroundings that the best thing to do is duck and cover. Capitalism has pounded in the idea of every man for himself and I think it has finally landed in Canada. What can I do that won't jeopardize my work and family? How do you make the average person aware without sounding like the sky is falling, even if it is? I would love to know.

Peter Skeels, Burnaby, BC

Climate change biggest terrorist An open letter to the PM et al:

I note that you have committed $254 million to public transit systems in Canadian cities – not to improve those systems so that more riders will get out of their cars, but "to combat terrorism."

There is no doubt that terrorists would like to retaliate, as long as "we" keep invading Islamic lands and killing Moslems, but there is considerable doubt about their ability to undertake terrorist attacks without being detected and thwarted by our security forces, especially now that those forces have been so fully alerted and beefed up by further hundreds of millions of dollars "… to improve security and combat terrorism" at our borders and throughout Canada.

There is, however, a far more dangerous and implacable force that has already destroyed almost all the pine forests of BC and Alberta, and which threatens to destroy forests right across Canada. This same terrible force has melted permafrost, threatening arctic species like the polar bear and destroying the Inuit way of life. It has already razed a major American city, and leading experts say that it poses a credible threat to raise the sea level by 20 to 40 feet, which will inundate coastal cities in Canada and around the globe. It poses a realistic threat to obliterate Bangladesh and other low-lying areas, destroy millions of hectares of agricultural land and cause tens of millions of people to become refugees.

Yet, while you spend hundreds of millions of extra dollars to ward off the possibility of a bomb on a bus or train – in case some terrorist should slip through our already fine-mesh net of security forces – you say that it would be too hard to do anything about the much greater danger until 2050.

What if you said it was too hard to do anything about terrorist threats until 2050? Yet who in their wildest nightmares could imagine terrorists doing one millionth the damage that global warming has already done, let alone its clear potential to disrupt human populations and, perhaps more real to you, economies around the globe?

Don't you think it's time to straighten out your priorities? I do.

Caspar Davis, Victoria, BC
Forwarded from Joe Hueglin's Daily Digest.

Solstice season features birth and death

FILMS WORTH WATCHING • *ROBERT ALSTEAD*

Keisha Castle-Hughes as Mary in* The Nativity Story*, Jaimie Trueblood/New Line Productions.

CULTURE

As far as festive movies go, *The Nativity Story* (opens December 1) fits the bill. Starting with the biblical story of the Christ Child's birth, which many of us know from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, it imagines the probable trials and tribulations of Mary and Joseph as they made their odyssey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

After the mega success of *The Passion of the Christ*, Hollywood has recognized there's an audience for films with a Christian theme, and while *The Nativity Story* is unquestionably a commercial project, religious critics have praised the tastefulness of the filmmakers in their creative choices. The film even had a premiere screening for the pope.

Director Catherine Hardwicke (*Thirteen, Lords of Dogtown*), a former production designer, went to great lengths to create an authentic biblical feel for the film, which included recreating Nazareth in the ancient Italian town of Matera, where Mel Gibson shot *The Passion*, while Mike Rich's screenplay elaborates on the biblical characters and event for dramatic effect. For example, Mary, played by 16-year-old Keisha Castle-Hughes (youngest ever nominee for an Oscar for her part in the Maori film *Whale Rider*) is initially unhappy about being wedded to Joseph, played by relative unknown Oscar Isaac, through an arranged marriage.

The film also explores the emotional turbulence Mary would have experienced as those around her responded to her immaculately conceived pregnancy with disbelief, even threatening stoning. Fortunately, as we know, the nativity story has a positive, uplifting conclusion.

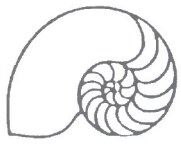
Hot on the heels of the controversial *Death of a President*, a fictitious account of the assassination of a president, comes a dramatization of the last days of Robert Kennedy, the man who might have been president had he not been assassinated in 1968. *Bobby* (out now) is an ambitious ensemble piece set in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, where Kennedy was shot. As it leads up to the momentous event, the film encapsulates the socio-political landscape of the time through multiple subplots, such as stories of the Mexican kitchen workers, the Vietnam War resistor, a boozy, show biz singer, the philandering hotel manager and so on.

While Kennedy himself only appears in news footage, or glimpsed from behind, it's particularly striking how articulate the man was, and even accounting for the selective choice of newsreel, how much his appeal crossed social and ethnic divides. The 22 characters are played by a veritable galaxy of stars including Charlie Sheen, Anthony Hopkins, Laurence Fishburne, Helen Hunt, Demi Moore, Sharon Stone, Elijah Wood, to name a few. Some of the dialogue is creaky and the sprawling nature of the multiple storylines means the pace of the film is sluggish at times. But while *Bobby* doesn't quite come off, it has an undeniable final impact.

Vancouver's Downtown East Side is the location for *Unnatural and Accidental* by Vancouver director Carl Bessai (*Lola, Emile, Severed*). Based on a true story, it recounts how Gilbert Paul Jordan killed as many as a dozen First Nations women by pouring alcohol down their throats until they died. Adapted by Métis playwright Marie Clements from her own stage play *Unnatural and Accidental Women*, the film is a vivid reminder of the vulnerability of many impoverished, First Nations women. The film, which has an almost feverish, dreamlike aesthetic, opens December 1 at Granville 7 Cinemas.

Finally, *Snow Cake*, an Anglo-Canadian production, sees the unusual pairing of Alan Rickman and Sigourney Weaver in an odd-couple type "dramedy" set in northern Ontario. As an ex-con, traumatized by a fatal car accident, Rickman plays the straight man to Weaver's live-wire, autistic character. Critics were not impressed with *Snow Cake* on its UK release, but fans of the two leads seemed to approve. (Opens December 15 at Fifth Avenue Cinemas.)

Reviewer Robert Alstead recently completed You Never Bike Alone*, a feature-length documentary about Vancouver's Critical Mass. (www.youneverbikealone.com)*



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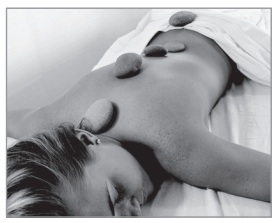

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Al Jazeera TV journalism with integrity

BY HSING LEE

Sir David Frost interviewing Tony Blair on Al Jazeera

Some of us are old enough to remember a time when TV news still had some integrity. Before Ronald Reagan and the deregulation of television, and before the military industrial complex bought US TV networks, American reporters provided viewers with real news stories about real issues. In so doing, they made a difference.

We've all seen the film reels from Vietnam. The two most famous, or infamous, are the point blank murder of a Vietnamese citizen by America's allies, and the film of the burned children running from a napalm attack. It was unbiased, uncensored journalism and it turned the tide of public opinion and helped put an end to one of the most immoral wars for fun and profit in the 20th century.

Today, TV journalism in the US no longer reports the news. What journalists do is act as mouthpieces for Wall Street and the White House, helping to make the case for war at any cost, even when they have to lie. And it's not just TV news that does this; the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the majority of other major newspapers do the exact same thing.

The final nail in the coffin for American news was the sale of Ted Turner's *CNN* to Time Warner. Once Time Warner was sold to AOL, AOL fired Turner and replaced him with hardcore Zionist Walter Isaacson. That spelled the end of unbiased news coverage about the Middle East in the United States of America.

I'm delighted to announce that TV journalism is back. And not just back, but back with a serious vengeance. On November 16, Al Jazeera launched its English language service worldwide on cable, satellite, broadcast and Internet streaming video. On day one, it made its way into more than eight million homes, not counting Internet viewers. Visit Al Jazeera's website (www.aljazeera.net/english) and check it out for yourself.

Unlike American news, Al Jazeera isn't interested in political spin, not even for its home country Qatar. (See its code of ethics posted on the website.) Part of Al Jazeera's mission includes presenting diverse points of view and opinions without bias or partiality and recognizing diversity in human societies, in order to present an unbiased and faithful reflection.

TV journalism in the US no longer reports the news. What journalists do is act as mouthpieces for Wall Street and the White House

And you know what? So far, it has done precisely that. Al Jazeera is so dedicated to this mission that it has managed to steal some of the best people away from *BBC*, *ABC* and the other major networks. Those of you who watch the news will be surprised at the faces and voices you recognize when you tune in. It even has Sir David Frost, who did a one-on-one interview with UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Al Jazeera is a breath of fresh air and a return to true investigative journalism on TV. There are half the number of commercials, no pro-war or anti-war bias and a fearlessness no longer seen at the other news networks. And it does it all in style.

You can't get Al Jazeera on TV in Canada. No cable company will touch it because pro-Israeli factions with a political axe to grind managed to get the CRTC to allow Al Jazeera on air only with a "censorship button" in place.

You can subscribe at (www.jumptv.com) for $9.95 US a month or $19.95 US for three months. That's 22 cents per day to get real, honest, no-spin broadcast news.

In this viewer's opinion, it's worth every penny.

Hsing Lee is a media researcher interested in international affairs.

Cell phone cont. from p.7

acts by the industry as it sought safer technologies, while at the same time printing users' manuals stating that cell phones were not harmful.

The industry was obviously aware that Dr. Carlo was a threat; since his findings, he has been threatened, physically attacked, defamed and his house mysteriously burned down. By 1998, his group's research showed that the nearfield electromagnetic plume of seven or eight inches around the antenna of the cell phone caused leakage in the blood brain barrier, as well as rare neural-epithelial cancers and double to triple the risk of benign and malignant brain tumours.

Then there's the story of Milt Bowling, Canada's most outspoken mobile phone critic and head of the Electromagnetic Radiation Task Force (ERTFC). In the '90s, Bowling was catapulted into an all-consuming battle with the industry when it attempted to erect a cell tower on the roof of his son's school. It became outrageous when one company implanted a mobile phone transmitter inside a church cross and donated it to the church across from the school.

Bowling's story appeared on the *Fifth Estate* in 1997 and made waves around the world. His chief concern now is that our safety regulations are ridiculously outdated, only requiring limits for radiation high enough to heat body tissue by one degree celsius within six minutes. He says this is like saying "if it doesn't cook you, there's no problem." Clearly, science shows problems prior to the tissue heating.

Given the threat of public opposition roused by activists such as Dr. Carlo, and Bowling here in Vancouver, why don't our governments establish more restrictions? Vested interests are a huge problem. Governments know they can only charge a tiny fee for licensing alternatives, such as fibre-optics, whereas they can charge a fortune for wireless bandwiths, totalling several billion dollars in the US. So governments have taken the path-most-paying. As an example, to pay for initial, expensive, wireless infrastructure (towers), industry made agreements with regulators (e.g. the Federal Communications Commission, or FCC in the US) that the big companies could pay 10 percent down and leave the cell phone users to pay off the remainder. This may be the reason for the aggressive marketing of mobile phone plans to teens; there's a big debt to pay off.

Photo by: J. Fransico

The industry's need to cover-up the hazards of wireless technology has been fuelled not only by fear of lost profits, but also by fear of bankruptcy. Insurance companies gradually withdrew all coverage for claims relating to health problems from cell phones following the first studies showing they were dangerous. Today, there are seven pending class action suits against the mobile phone industry; one successful lawsuit alone could bankrupt a company by setting a precedent for other pending lawsuits. It took just one such lawsuit each to bring down the silicone breast implant and asbestos industries.

A more frightening side of all of this is that the cell/wireless industries represent such an enormous portion of the stock market. If they caved in suddenly, the ripples could be catastrophic. We all need to be sensible. Expose the truth, plan for changes and move swiftly and intelligently towards a better, less wireless world.

This article was inspired by a recent talk by Dr. George Carlo, a scientist and cell phone industry whistleblower. Visit (www.safewireless.org) *for more information about Dr. Carlo's work. His visit to Vancouver was sponsored by the Health Action Network Society (www.hans.org).*

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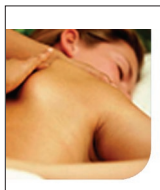

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Satisfaction

TWENTY SOMETHING • *ISHI DINIM*

…and that man comes on the radio he's tellin' me more and more about some useless information supposed to fire my imagination I can't get no, oh no no no hey hey hey, that's what I say…

– the Rolling Stones

'Tis the season approaching, that massive reminder of how much we have already and how much more we should want from life. I was thinking about how, in this current mode, we are inundated with messages that reiterate what we're supposed to need: additional, change, new, more, further, bonus, other.

This concept of desire that stokes us on to "greater things" isn't only a bad thing. Frustration with our current situation is a natural process. It's something that can motivate a change for the better; we transform ourselves based on the optimistic premise of continually improving our plot and surroundings.

The problem is that most of the time we are disconnected from the natural world. The influences that affect our dissatisfaction in modern, developed societies are generally artificial. This experience of discontent can be perplexing: "Do I really need new shoes. I don't like my job. I wish I were in better shape. Who do I vote for this time?"

How can I manage an almost inevitable return of the feeling of a lack of fulfillment? I take stock of all the great abundance in my life: all my basic needs are met, yet, still, right around the corner I find sadness in what I haven't achieved or may never achieve. I'm dwelling more in a world of want than of need. Am I hardwired to always want more from life? Is it somehow connected to that creative urge, that which moves us to grand things and forgettable ones as well?

I constantly struggle between my ascetic idealism and the reality of living with my ego in an imperfect world. It's like the dilemma of standing at an all-you-can-eat buffet. My mind swivels: "There's food at home in the fridge… those poor starving children the world over …, how long has this stuff been sitting out? … you're not even really that hungry."

Am I hardwired to always want more from life? Is it somehow connected to that creative urge, that which moves us to grand things and forgettable ones as well?

I wonder what it would take to be in a state of contentedness all the time? I've often heard people say that less is more and that people with very little are the happiest. If I were poor and the bombs were dropping, would I be?

George W. Bush said, "If this were a dictatorship, it'd be a heck of a lot easier, just as long as I'm the dictator."The leader of the most powerful democracy (arguable, I know) thinks that the grass would be greener if he could lead like his old pal Saddam. I'm sure there are qualities of Iraqi life that are attractive to us and elements of Western life that are appealing to them. If Iraqis wanted a democracy, and supposedly got one, then why do all they have are capital punishment, torture and piles of bodies to show for it?

Films:
Babel
Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers
Links:
www.wakeupandsaveyourcountry.com
Quotes:

Once one knows what really matters, one ceases to be voluble. And what does really matter? That is easy: thinking and doing, doing and thinking, and these are the sum of all wisdom. Both must move ever onward in life, to and fro, like breathing in and breathing out. Whoever makes it a rule to test action by thought, thought by action, cannot falter, and if he does, will soon find his way back to the right road.

–Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ishi graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2001, with a BFA major in photography. He makes films, collects cacti, and ponders many things. Currently he is trying to figure out what to do with the rest his life. contactishi@yahoo.ca

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December

Reader survey

WIN PRIZES!

In anticipation of our 25th anniversary

Dear Common Ground Reader,

Your feedback by filling out this short survey is incredibly important to us.

We'll be giving great prizes by random draw and, as well, a special prize for your idea for improving the magazine if we implement it. Prizes include, but are not limited to, a bicycle of up to $500 value from Dan's Bike Shop, dinner worth $100 at Aphrodites Cafe & Pie Shop, and $50 worth of natural dry cleaning from Helping Hand Cleaners. These are just small tokens of our gratitude to you for sending us your thoughts. The rest of our gratitude will be shown in the exciting future issues of Common Ground inspired by your support.

Of course we'll make sure that all responses remain strictly confidential. Please feel comfortable answering as many questions as you like.

When you've finished, either clip it out and mail it to Common Ground Head Office, # 204 - 4381 Fraser St., Vancouver, BC V5V 4G4, or fax it to 604-733-4415. You can also find this survey on our website www.commonground.ca where you can fill it out online or print and mail.

Section 1. Tell us what you like about Common Ground

1. What characteristics of Common Ground (CG) interest you?_____
_____
_____

2. What is it about CG that distinguishes if from other publications?_____
_____

3. Why do you read CG?
___Read feature articles
___Read favourite columnists
___Browse by images and headlines for interesting articles
___Browse entire magazine for resources, articles and ads of interest
___Learn about new ideas, products, services and events

4. Do you want us to keep bringing feature topics like healthy democracy, Enronizing BC Hydro, peace, ecology, etc. not well covered by other media? ___Y ___N

5. Rank the following subject areas in order (1 for the one you are most passionate about, 5 for least passionate):
___Medicine, Our Culture, Health and Spirituality (Healthy People
___Politics and the World (Healthy Democracy)
___Environment and Activism (Healthy Planet)
___Films, Arts, Foods, Media and Upcoming Events (Culture)
___Other:_____

6. Which content do you most often read (list in order, 1st, 2nd etc.)?
___Health features by Alan Cassels
___Features by Geoff Olson
___Features by _____(name your favourite columnist)
___Environment: Science Matters by David Suzuki
___Culture: Films by Robert Alstead
___Earthfuture by Guy Dauncey
___Nutrispeak by Vesanto Melina
___Garden Path by Carolyn Herriot
___Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle
___Universe Within by Gwen Randall-Young
___Twenty Something by Ishi Dinim

7. Which of the following actions have you taken in the last 12 months (you may check more than one)?
___Cut out or photocopied an article(s) or ad
___Discussed an article or ad with someone
___Kept an issue for future reference
___Gave an issue to a friend, colleague or relative
___Recommended a product or service seen in CG
___Made a purchase or donation based on an article or ad
(Which ad?_____)
___Requested information on a product or service
(What was it?_____)
___Emailed or visited an advertiser's website
(Which advertiser?_____)

8. Your ideas for improving CG:_____
_____
_____

9. Do you use a computer? ___Y ___N What type?_____
Software used?_____

10. How often do you visit our website? ___Often ___Rarely
___First time today ___Never

11. How long have you been reading CG?_____

12. How often do you read CG?
___Every month ___Frequently ___Occasionally ___Rarely
___First time today

13. How long do you keep your copy?_____

14. Number of times you refer to a copy or share it with others?
_____

Continued on reverse...

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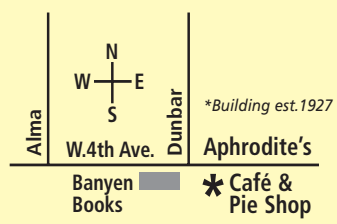

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....Continued from previous page

Section 2. Tell us about yourself

15. Where do you live?
_____(place), _____(neighbourhood)

16. Which of the following are most important in your life:

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Seeking spiritual inspiration	____	____	____
Social activism	____	____	____
Mind/body connection	____	____	____
Environmental issues	____	____	____
Arts and creativity	____	____	____
Responsible use of science	____	____	____
Healthy living	____	____	____
Other:_____	____	____	____

17. What are your three favourite activities? _____, _____, _____

18. What career or stage of your career are you in?
___Self-employed
___Executive
___Manager/director
___Non-management
___Entry-level
___Student
___Part-time
___Retired
___Unemployed
___Other (please describe):_____

19. Type of housing: ___Own your home, ___Rent apartment or house, ___Co-op living situation, ___Other:_____

20. Your family grouping: ___Number of children, ___Number of people living in your household

21. Birthing order: ___First born, ___Second born or middle child, ___Youngest, ___Only child. Number of brothers and sisters?_____

22. What are your most used forms of transportation (1 being most used, 2 next most, etc.)?
___car or other gasoline vehicle
___carpool or shared vehicle situation
___hybrid
___public transit
___bike or non-motorized vehicle
___walking
___other (please describe):_____

23. Would you prefer an electric vehicle to a gasoline vehicle?
___Y ___N

24. What media do you frequent, besides CG? (please describe)_____
_____

25. What style(s) of music do you most often listen to? _____
_____

26. Education:
___High school
___College
___University
___Masters or PhD
___Trade school
___Special course (list type):_____
___Other:_____

27. Relationship status:
___Presently married
___in long-term relationship
___single
___dating
___divorced
___separated
___looking for a relationship (How?_____)

28. Annual household income:___$0-19K, ___$20-29K, ___$30-39K, ___$40-49K, ___$50-59K, ___$60-69K, ___$70-79K, ___$80-89K, ___$90-100K, ___Above 100K (_____amount)

29. Age:_____

30. Gender:___M ___F

Section 3.
Products, services and events found in Common Ground

31. How often have you noticed an interesting product, service or event while browsing CG in the past year?
___Many times, ___Several times, ___Once , ___Never

32. How many times have you purchased the following products or services in the past year?

	7 or more times	4 to 6 times	1 to 3 times	Never
Yoga classes or materials	___	___	___	___
Spiritual classes or workshops	___	___	___	___
Other workshops or retreats	___	___	___	___
Meditation instruction	___	___	___	___
Learning to teach healing arts	___	___	___	___
Films, music, books, DVDs	___	___	___	___
Health food products	___	___	___	___
Organic products	___	___	___	___
Health and healing supplements	___	___	___	___
Career and life coaching	___	___	___	___
Alternative medical or dental care	___	___	___	___
Oriental medical care (acupuncture, Chinese medicine)	___	___	___	___
Psychological counselling	___	___	___	___
Massage or bodywork	___	___	___	___
Other(s):_____	___	___	___	___

33. For events, products or services found in CG how often have you done the following in the past year?

	7 or more times	4 to 6 times	1 to 3 times	Never
Made a call to get more information	___	___	___	___
Visited a website	___	___	___	___
Purchased a service, book or product	___	___	___	___
Attended an event	___	___	___	___
Suggested any of the above to another person	___	___	___	___

34. Who would you recommend to advertise in CG? _____
_____

In 20 words or less, what would you like to say to us? _____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for filling out the Common Ground readers survey! Please fill out this ballot to enter to win a prize from our draws. All survey responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

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Phone:_____ Email:_____
May we print your name and picture if you win? ___Y ___N

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– John A. Simone, Sr

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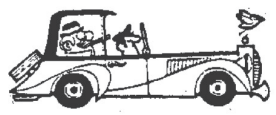

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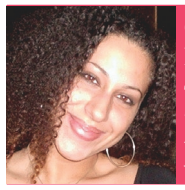

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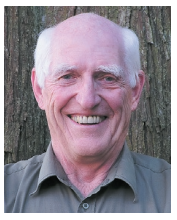

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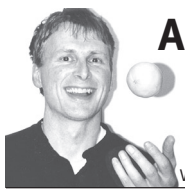

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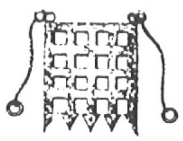

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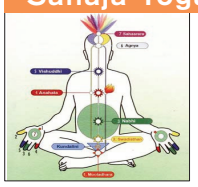

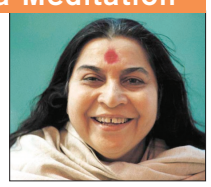

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WEDNESDAYS: **Dec 06** *Mediumship* Alan Holmes • **Dec 13** *Open Circle* Glenda McLeod • **Dec 20** *She's Medium Rare–psychic readings* Barbara Leonard • **Dec 27** *Closed for the holiday season – Merry Christmas!*
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Sun Dec 17 Festival of Lights • Sun Dec 24 Morning Service
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Fitts cont. from p.13

a poor neighbourhood, but it was unthinkable a child couldn't go down the street to the store. In my lifetime, the Dow Jones has gone up 6,000 percent and the Popsicle Index in my old neighbourhood is probably about 10 percent." This Hobbesian state of affairs, she believes, is the result of the tapeworm's activities at the local level.

In relative terms, Salt Spring has a high Popsicle Index, she says, in part because of its strong community businesses, and the fact that islands have a natural geographical buffer of water from the centres of power; they are that much more removed, if only in a small part, from the tapeworm. "I think were going into a time where the only financial networks we can depend on are each other," Fitts says.

The real estate bubble is about to go, and the middle class is facing diminishing prospects for getting ahead. We are all on the Titanic, but we can start building our own lifeboats now. Lending networks among small groups of friends and family, and investing in real things, such as precious metals, are a good start. Investment in sustainable technologies is also a wise move.

Fitts insists that part of reaching an environmentally sustainable world is getting our financial system to operate by place in a way that there's harmony between the living equity of a place and a rational growth model.

Envisaging decentralized communities that are united globally in the local exercise of economic autonomy, Fitts conducts seminars around the world on how to go about this, through her idea of the "Solari Circle," which she defines as "… a cross between an investment club and a French resistance cell."

The former Wall Street/Washington insider closes her talk with an anecdote attributed to the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung. A young woman suffering from a nervous breakdown came to Jung for therapy. She had married a much older, wealthier man and then found a younger lover. She confessed to Jung that she killed her husband to be with him. The murderer had escaped detection, but believed that from the time she had killed her husband, everywhere she went the birds stopped singing. Fitts finds this anecdote relevant to our entropic times.

She believes we live in a system that is rapidly exhausting the living capital of the planet, yet we tacitly prop up it up with our purchasing and investing habits, spending our lives chasing after strips of paper emblazoned with dead politicians. In our half-conscious complicity with business-as-usual, we are the assassins in the garden, who bring silence in our wake.

The first step, she insists, is coming clean on what our lives are really about and what they should be about. "Imagine that all creation knew that you were trying to solve the problem," Fitts says, alluding to her belief in an invisible means of support. And that is what keeps her going in her quest to rebuild happier, healthier communities that leave a lighter footprint on the Earth.

"I want to make the birds sing again," she says.

For a further exploration of Catherine Austin Fitts' ideas, visit (www.solari.com). *An archive of her columns for* Scoop *media can be found at* (www.scoop.co.nz/features/RealDeal.html).

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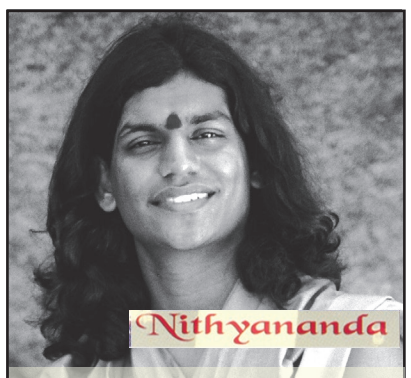

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DATEBOOK

List at: www.commonground.ca > Advertising > Datebook

DEC 5-SEPT 25, 2007
Music of the Whole World: six-part series highlighting the emerging art of intercultural music, hosted by the Vancouver Public Library. Dec 5: Gamelan Music and the West, VPL, 350 Georgia St., Alice Mackay room, 7pm, Free. Schedule at (www.vi-co.org).

DEC 7
Join Wilderness Committee founder Paul George as he presents Big Trees, not Big Stumps, 7pm, Chapters, 2505 Granville Street. Booksigning, stories and slide show. Contact 604-733-4884, (monika@greendreams.com).

DEC 8-10
Kabbalah Sound Prayers with Shulamit Elson. Go beyond words. Booksigning: Dec. 8, free, Sacred Space. Concert: 7:30, Dec. 9, St. James Hall, $25 @ Banyen. Workshop: Dec. 10, Jewish Community Centre, 604-669-2505 (www.silentground.com).

DEC 8, 9, 10
Foot Reflexology Introduction commences certificate weekend course. Intro: $10, Course $295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818 (www.pacificreflexology.com).

DEC 8, 9, 15 & 16
Theatre in the Raw's Upcoming Performances, The Rhizome Cafe, 317 East Broadway. Doors open 7pm, show starts 7:30pm. All tickets $10 & under. Visit (www.theatreintheraw.ca) or call the box office, 604-708-5448.

DEC 8-31
Festival of Lights at VanDusen Botanical Garden: 5-9:30pm daily (closed Christmas Day), Oak St. at West 37th Ave. Advance tickets 604-231-7535 (www.vandusengarden.org).

DEC 9
Shamanic Drumming & Dreaming Circle/Workshop: 7pm. Learn to experience insight and healing from your Nature Spirit guardians. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Centre, 1254, W. 7th. By donation. Turtle Island Healing Circles. 604-418 9636 (www.drumcircles.ca).

DEC10
Celebrate Human Rights Day This year Human Rights Day focuses on fighting poverty as a matter of obligation, not of charity. Visit (http://www.ohchr.org/english/).

DEC 11
An Introduction to Energy Medicine & The Effectiveness of BodyTalk. Dr. Ka'imi Pilipovich, Vice-President of the International BodyTalk Association. 7:30-9pm, Tickets $20. Contact 778-389-7900 or (info@bodytalkvancouver.com).

DEC 16
Wolfsong Winter Solstice - Medicine Wheel Celebration. Saturday, 7pm. Participate singing shared native sacred healing chants. N. American style drumming, cedar flute, didgeridoo. At Vancouver Multi-Cultural Centre, 1254 W. 7th. By donation. Turtle Island Healing Circles. 604-418-9636 (www.drumcircles.ca).

DEC 16
Christmas in The Round with the MantraVani Orchestra. Sacred songs and chants. St Marks Church, 1805 Larch & W. 2nd, 7:30pm. $20, $15/seniors (Banyen Books) $25/door. Contact Jerry DesVoignes: (info@healingvoices.net) (www.healingvoices.net).

JAN 13
An introductory 8-hour seminar on how we apply the knowledge of Traditional Chinese Feng Shui principles and astrology Boar year. Early bird $212. Info: 604-961-8834 (www.acuqimed.com).

JAN 19, 20, 21
Foot Reflexology Introduction commences certificate weekend course. Intro: $10, Course $295. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818 (www.pacificreflexology.com).

SATURDAYS

Holistic Healing Fair: Third Saturday of every month. AWAKENING HEART-15177 Russell Ave-White Rock. 10-4pm. Free Admission. 604-535-6603 or (www.emergingpathway.ca).

SUNDAYS

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International Spiritualist Alliance: #201-317 Columbia Street, New West, 604-521-6336. Sunday services, 11am. Rev. Joyce Tarvin, 604-433-6663. See Resource Directory (www.isacanada.ca).

Mountaintop Unity Find a positive New Thought approach to life at Unity! Sundays 10:30am, John Braithwaite Community Centre, 145 West 1st, North Vancouver. 604-787-1477 (www.unitymountaintop.ca).

MONDAYS

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TUESDAYS

Pranic Healing Clinics: Non-touch energy healing. By donation. Tuesdays 11am-3pm and 6pm-9pm. 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver. Open Dec 5 & 12. Reopens Jan 9. (www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver).

Reflexology Student Clinic sessions, only $18. Evenings only. By appointment. Pacific Institute of Reflexology. 604-875-8818 (www.pacificreflexology.com).

WEDNESDAYS

Hawaiian Medicine Circle: 7 pm. Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks afterwards with like-minded people. $10 donation. At Hale Ola, a place of Healing, 1215 Madison Ave., Burnaby. 604-431-7474. Call Kumu Kaimana.

Meditation & Self-inquiry: Have you lost the balance and rhythm in your life? Let stillness (through self-inquiry) return your wholeness. 5-7pm, 604-317-1613.

Children of War fundraiser: Chai Gallery at East is East hosts a fundraiser for Children of War (www.thechildrenofwar.org) featuring local musicians & traditional dancers. Every Wed. evening, 7:30pm – 1:30am, 3243 W. Broadway. $25/door or call 778-837-1862.

THURSDAYS

Pranic Healing Clinic: Non-touch energy healing. By donation. West Vancouver United Church, 2062 Esquimalt Ave. Thursdays 10am-2pm. Open Dec 7 & 14. Reopens Jan 11. (www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver).

ONGOING

Free Meditation Workshop: Experience Kundalini awakening through Sahaja Yoga, as taught by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi & enjoy your Powers at our Weekly classes, always free and open to all. 604-597-8440 (www.sahajayoga.org).

Prana Yoga College Teacher Training in Thailand January/07, 604-682-2121 or (www.pranayoga.com).

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See(www.hydrofactsbc.ca).

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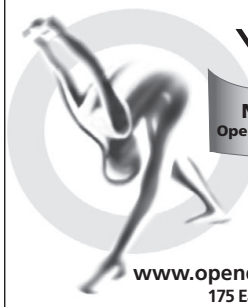

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Norah smiling her Song "The Joy of the Lord is my life!"

An angel for Banyen Books

Norah was a free soul who helped Banyen Books survive in its early years. She lived in a tiny loft in the back of the store from 1970 to 1980, cleaning and saving every last scrap of God's usable creation, and in many ways helped us young, spaced-out, aspiring yogis keep it together.

Always barefoot, always with a smile on her face, thanks on her lips and a song in her heart, Norah was an unassuming, loving and strong mentor to me. She taught me to drive and helped me learn how to work hard with joy. To her, creation was for giving, for sharing and for glorifying. Each afternoon, her songs to God – often old Christian hymns she had slightly re-worded to suit her more universal consciousness – would waft out over the bookstore. In those years, there was no music in the store, but there was Norah's sweet and lovely voice lilting out over the hippies and seekers reading in the aisles and in armchairs. (She recorded more than a hundred of her songs on three tapes, which hopefully will be available in a new CD called *Holy Communion*.)

Never asking for anything and always finding ways to mend, reconcile, reuse, recycle and make the best of everything, this hardy woman, originally from Saskatchewan, was a genuine servant of the divine good in all; her spirit of simplicity and gratitude for this chance to love and serve all was contagious and a powerful teaching for all of us who worked at Banyen.

Norah was a terrifically strong-willed, strong-bodied spirit. She was an ascetic, often living on very little food, just "… the light of God," as she would say. A rare yogini she was, living in the caves of Banyen for those years, and later at Arran and Ratana's, and her final years at Linda and Kulwant's. May her refrain, "The joy of the Lord is my life!" find its resonance in our hearts in our own ways.

Kolin Lymworth is the founder and owner of Banyen Books in Vancouver (www.banyenbooks.com).

A godsend for the Golden Lotus,
Vancouver's first vegetarian restaurant

The first full-time helper to appear at the Golden Lotus was Norah Lee, one of God's originals. Then in her 50s, Norah had various successful careers behind her: real estate, horseback guide, plumber and bulldozer operator. (*Time* magazine ran a full-page feature on her in the early 1950s). Several years earlier, Norah had been bankrupted after guaranteeing a loan to a slick promoter. In the aftermath, her only possessions were a little Nash Rambler car, which she lived in, a set of clothes, one pair of shoes and her book of hymns and inspirational songs. When her shoes wore out, come ice or snow, Norah went barefoot for the rest of her long life.

Norah was thin but strong as a big man. Once she went on a 49-day fast while working 10 hours a day in the kitchen. Her only food was the juice of half a lemon every two days. Forty days into the fast, Norah decided to reorganize the storage room and was throwing around 100-pound sacks of brown rice.

Whenever I tried to pay her, she wouldn't hear of it, saying, "The good Lord has directed me here to be of service to my fellow man. After all my money was gone, I decided never to work for material wages again. I'll be happy to just have a little corner to stay in, and if there's anything I can do, that would be a blessing for me." I assured Norah that if it were in my power, she would always have a home and never want. For more than 20 years she lived with us. Embodying the spirit of the faqir or renunciate, Norah often spent entire nights in meditation.

On November 8, 2006, on her 94th birthday, Norah checked out from the Earth-plane, and her usually strongly wrinkled face was remarkably clear and young looking. The day before, when a nurse had asked how she was doing, Norah replied in a strong, clear voice, "I'm fine! And I'm going to die in my bed tonight!"

Reprinted from Moth & the Flame (www.mothandtheflame.com) *by Arran Stephens, co-founder with life companion Ratana of Nature's Path Foods.*

Norah lived her last years restfully at Linda Bagga's home in North Vancouver and passed on peacefully at the Lynn Valley Care Centre. For information on her spiritual path, see (www.sos.org).

On Track Zodiac

DECEMBER 2006 • *ILONA HEDI GRANIK*

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 19) The heart of the nomad is like the spirit of a child. Able to seek adventure and live life with courage, you now feel like quenching that thirst for all things new. You will embark on any journey and your dreams sparkle with reality and a sense of belonging.

TAURUS (Apr 20 - May 21) The archetype of the rebel has risen from the depths to shake hands with your shy side. You could find yourself becoming more outgoing and less fearful of the future. Able to jump into unfamiliar territory, you discover that you have an abundance of carefree living to claim.

GEMINI (May 22 - Jun 20) These are fiery times and your mental energy could be explosive and combative, or at least less compromising than usual. You will want to advance in your career, but you may have to wait for all the right elements to line up before you proceed. If you can't be passive, try your hand at daily meditation.

CANCER (Jun 21 - Jul 22) If you have allowed your independence to isolate you, you now turn a corner. You may immerse yourself in the crowd with more friendliness and fewer restrictions. You feel a charge of energy from the planets that rule creativity and ingenuity. Relationships bring with them a twist of fate.

LEO (Jul 23 - Aug 22) It's not your usual manner to be detached and aloof, but chances are you find that being distant is where you feel comfortable. Sentimentality didn't serve your needs, causing you to pull away from others. Perhaps you think the past was filled with thankless relationships. Look for more personal resolve in the approaching times.

VIRGO (Aug 23 - Sep 22) You will yearn to give up the struggle to convince yourself and others that you know it all. The trick of your mind that created illusions no longer has any power. Flexibility is key, as you watch your reactions and apply a barometer to your emotions. Delay any quick schemes for success, as you will need balance.

LIBRA (Sep 23 - Oct 22) After so many sobering moments in the last months, you could find yourself having more stimulating escapades. Through self-governance and providence, you are toasting the town and revelling in your existence. You are also giving yourself room to fully expand under the laws of heavenly and physical pursuits.

SCORPIO (Oct 23 - Nov 21) By following a stronger connection, however inconvenient, you find your inner guide is remarkable in clarity and wisdom. As you fall into the arms of the unknown, you may wonder how you ever doubted your intuition. Perhaps you shielded yourself and it proved only to make your mask more distinctive. A greater freedom comes to you now as you tempt fortune.

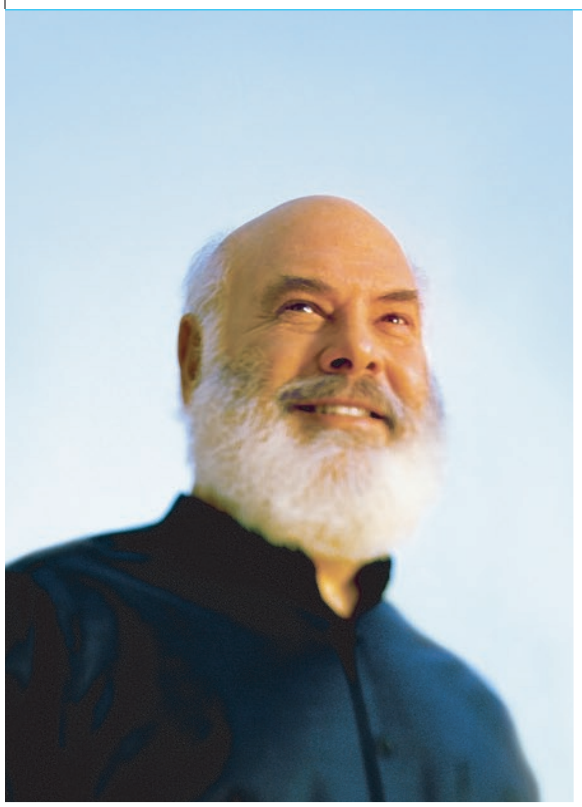
SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21) You could seek a mediator to assist you with matters outside your area of expertise. Enlisting others' support will ease your struggle and blend perfectly with your affairs. Now, with a preponderance of planets in Sagittarius, you may feel exhilarated and tuckered out at the same time. However, you are whirling with vitality.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19) Perhaps you feel exceptionally lazy and want to put all thinking and work aside. Fear not; a new outlet for your self-expression presents itself to utilize your pent-up energy. While you are familiar with your natural flow, now there is grace in your movements. A fog of confusion is passing and brings jubilant times.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 - Feb 19) The animals nudge you out of your sleep and appreciate your care. The underprivileged respond to your open hand and you feel acknowledged in your quest for justice. You are full of depth and vision and live a more humanitarian experience.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) Your greatest challenge will be the main theme of your salvation. All of life is seemingly shouting to you to wake up. The crisis that was your demise is fading, and a new you – a sparkling powerhouse – emerges. You are the butterfly that once crawled slowly, but eagerly, to enlightenment.

Ilona Hedi Granik is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 32 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing. *(iamilona@gmail.com) (www.HeartLightCentre.com)*



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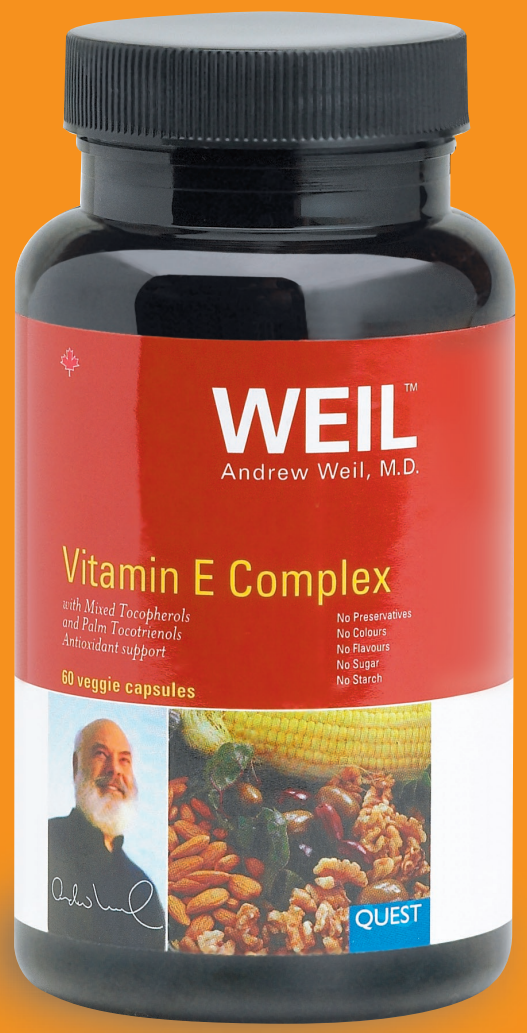

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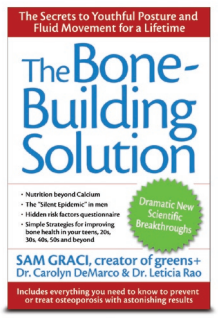
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